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COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE®

DECEMBER 5, 2003 #1568

MAX AND MORITZ DOLLS SELL HIGH!
What does this duo have to do with Hans and Fritz? The answer, Page 38

Ve haff vays of making you collect!

Big Apple goes National at Thanksgiving

Big Apple Conventions' 5th Annual National Comic Book, Art, Toy, and Sci-Fi Expo is scheduled for Nov. 28-30 at the Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 W. 18th St. (between 6th and 7th Ave.), in New York City.

The show has grown from Big Apple's regular two-day shows, which moved in September to The Penn Plaza Pavilion, 33rd St. and 7th Ave.

This year's guest of honor is Neal Adams, who will be joined by other comics guests including Julius Schwartz, Gene Colan, John Cassaday, Kevin Maguire, Alex Maleev, Bill Sienkiewicz, Brian Pulido, Joe Kelly, Peter David, Joe Linsner, Keith Giffen, and Mark Texeira. Other New York-area creators often drop by, as well.

Tickets are $15 per day at the door, $12 per day in advance, and can be purchased through Ticketmaster at (212) 307-7171 or at *www.ticketmaster.com*. College students will receive $2 off admission at the door with a valid student I.D., and children under 12 are admitted free with an adult.

Show hours are Friday 1 to 8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.✦

THE A LIST

Fagin the Jew
Hulk: Gray #1-2
Peanuts: The Art of Charles Schulz SC
Azumanga Daioh Vol. 1
Gahan Wilson's Monster Party
Batman #620

Review section, page 22

CURRENT COMICS

Shi migrates to Dark Horse!

Read all about it on page 14; Current comics news coverage begins on Page 12

BACK ISSUES

Captain Comics has Vision problems!

Dear Captain, Page 34; Nostalgia features begin on Page 28

THE GUIDE

Chuck Rozanski gets terms from Marvel!

Tales from the Database, page 42; Market reports begin on Page 38

What's shipping this week? Page 13

What's shipping this month? Page 15

Visit www.collect.com/comics

PHANTOM JACK HEADS FOR IMAGE, OTHERS TO ANTHOLOGY

IS IT AN EPIC?

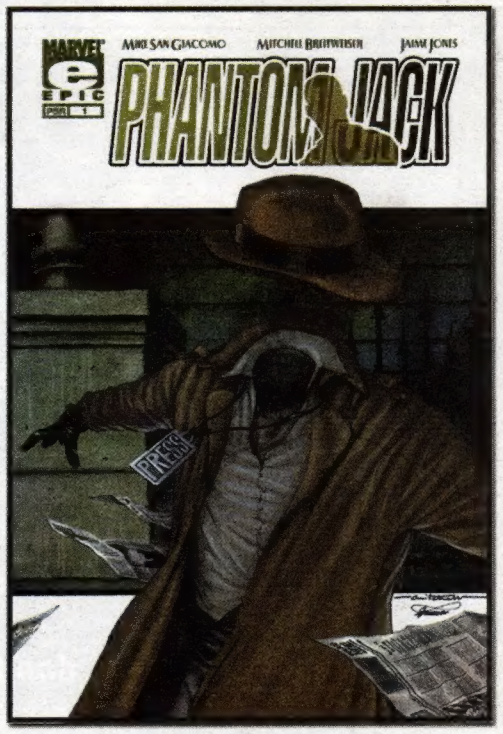
By **Nate Melby**

The term "epic" seems to have been a misnomer for a line of comics initially announced as Marvel's major outreach to find new comics talent. Rather than producing epics, the imprint is now reduced to three series scheduled to conclude by spring and one apparent wrap-up project. Marvel recently informed creators whose approved Epic work had yet to be published that the company will, instead, release their material in an Epic anthology that will test response. This followed the announcement, reported in ***CBG*** #1565, that Marvel had suspended consideration of future Epic submissions.

The four series that were announced for inclusion in the February anthology are *Phantom Jack*, *Young Ancient One*, *Strange Magic*, and *Sleepwalker*.

This news, however, did not make at least one of the creators happy, and *Phantom Jack* writer Mike Sangiacomo told ***CBG*** that he would take his series to Image Comics.

Sangiacomo told ***CBG***, "Rather than be attached to a project that, in all likelihood, would die after one issue, I opted to pull my comic out of Epic and shop around. Since my character and story were set completely outside the Marvel universe, I had an easier time than *Strange Magic*, *Young Ancient One*, or *Sleepwalker*, all steeped in Marvel lore."



See more on **Page 13** and commentaries on **Pages 10 and 54!**

This issue was shipped November 17

COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE'S CGC INDEX

For complete coverage **see page 41**

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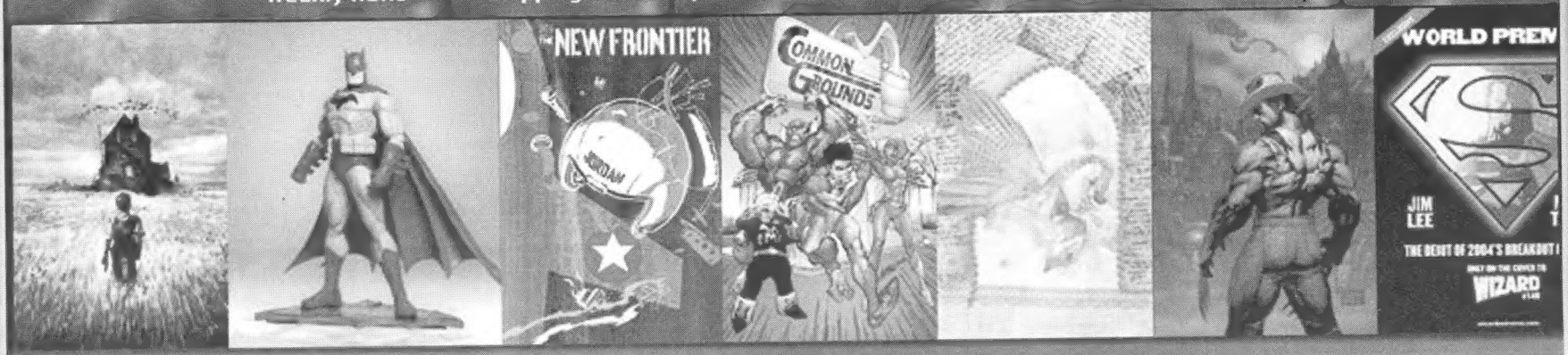

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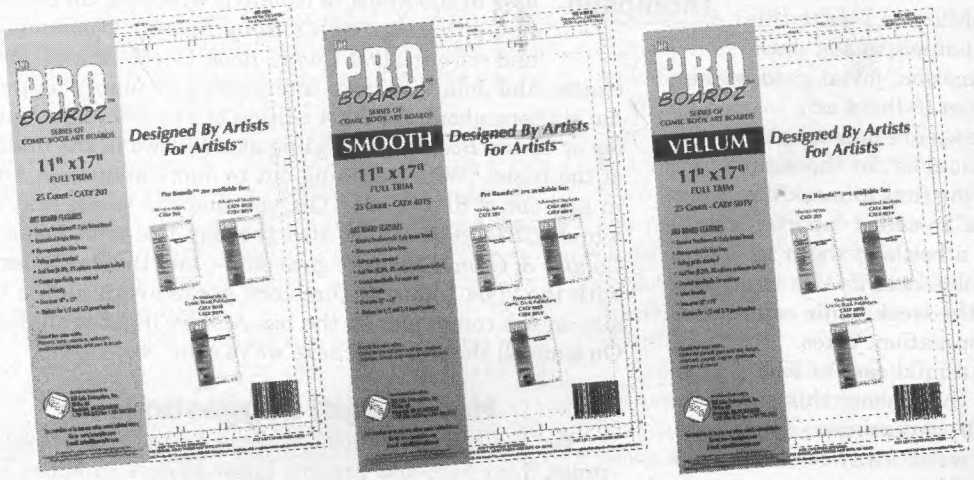

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MAGGIE THOMPSON
EDITOR

BRENT FRANKENHOFF
MANAGING EDITOR

JOYCE GREENHOLDT
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

NATE MELBY
REPORTER

SHAWN WILLIAMS
DESIGNER

NORMA JEAN FOCHS
ADVERTISING MANAGER

SHANNON PIOTROWSKI
ADVERTISING SALES

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MARK WILLIAMS
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JOHN JACKSON MILLER
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

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EDITORIAL

Be calm

If you step on an atom bomb

Maggie **Thompson**

It's only a matter of mind over matter. That's what the song (I believe the calypso was performed by Edmundo Ros) said in the late 1940s: "If your slip is showing, keep going." I find myself humming it this week, which is one of those plow-through-it weeks we occasionally come to, as we put out a weekly newspaper on time all the time.

Some of the stresses are wonderful ones. John Jackson Miller and Meredith Miller, as I write this Nov. 12, are welcoming a companion to son Jack. We are filled with eager anticipation, jovial good wishes, and all for Josephine Marie Miller (8 lbs. 4 oz.).

But many of the week's stresses are less delightful.

Nate Melby dislocated his shoulder for the eighth time in eight years. While I've been the first to mock him when the agony has been a result of so-called "sports," even I must confess that reaching for a bottle of water in his car was no sort of frivolous, mockable activity. He is gritting his teeth and getting through the week while confronting the inevitability of a shoulder operation. Yikes.

I had what was apparently a mild case of food poisoning early in the week. The nice thing about this particular event was that it limited itself to dizziness, queasiness, sweating, and chills. And it went away — as did the spaghetti sauce I'd been gradually using up.

And, just after his return from a couple days' vacation during which he visited an ailing, elderly great-aunt, Brent was notified that she had died at age 101. So the second he's done with his part of the issue, he's heading back to southern Wisconsin for more family time.

And Joyce Greenholdt's husband had enough abdominal pain to send him to the doctor to check for possible appendicitis. (Yay! It wasn't! It was just a pulled muscle!)

And we keep going.

And the job gets done.

Like so many others in the comics biz, we "multi-task." ***CBG*** goes to press every Friday (except this month during Thanksgiving week, when it goes out Wednesday). But, at the moment, we're also in the midst of (finally!) wrapping up production on Craig Shutt's *Baby Boomer Comics* book and on our *2004 Comic Book Checklist and Price Guide*. And John has been interviewed by umpty-ump radio stations about the 2004 edition of *The Standard Catalog of Comic Books* — including at least two in the middle of the night. (We're reaching out to *many* audiences, both in and *out* of drive time.) Oh, yes, and the Wednesday on which ***CBG*** goes out is also the day the next issue of *Comics & Games Retailer* goes out — and this is the issue with the 2004 Industry Directory, packed with all the basics on the companies in the biz. And we'll get it all done. On time all the time. Because we're calm. ✦

Holiday gift suggestions

For the next few weeks in these pages, we'll provide input from past and present letter-writers in hopes of coming up with The Perfect Gift-Giving Solution for our readers. We'd enjoy reading your contributions to the collaborative effort!

You can send them to *ohso@krause.com* or to our postal address ***CBG*** Editorial Dept., 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54945.

LETTERS

Letters **To The Editor**

MOST FRIGHTENING

Wally Stoelting
5824 Winamac Lake Dr.
Mishawaka, IN 46545

In ***CBG*** #1563, you ask for the most frightening comic book.

Comics have never really frightened me — chilled, maybe, from comics like *Miracleman*.

Comics have mostly been cool, neat, amazing, and inspiring when good, but never frightening.

So probably the most frightening thing was not being able to find a comic book on the newsstand that I wanted and was waiting for — like *Justice League of America* #11, the end of the first JLA two-parter.

Possibly the most frightening comic, then, was the first time I bought a new Marvel comic and found inside that the new cover was on a reprint!

I could have spent my money on another new one! Aargh!

SELLING RUNS *NOW*

Chuck LaChance
1220 NE 3 St.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

My wife has been jumping up and down on my head for the last year to get a bigger residence. Not that I can blame her, since we live in a small condo, and the walk-in closet is full to the brim with you know what: comics.

So I am endeavoring to sell off my Silver Age collection to pay off the balance of my mortgage and purchase that new home. Here is where I need information and help.

I have been selling small lots of comics on eBay for years and it has been very successful. The lots were small, and mailing was no problem.

Now I am in the ballpark of selling entire runs, such as *X-Men, Daredevil, etc.*, which are quite large. Can anyone give me information on the best way to ship a large collection? What is best: U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Ser-

CBG OTHER OPINIONS

● **Hey Kids!Comics!** by Heidi MacDonald 10
● **Tony's Tips** by Tony Isabella.....20
● **Tales from the Database** by Chuck Rozanski 42
● **But I Digress** by Peter David 54

vice, Fed Ex?

Is it best to wrap a short storage box? Is that possible?

What about incidentals: insurance, receipt of delivery, *etc.*? I plan on liquidation within the month and would appreciate any help on this matter.

Chris J., I am sure you have some experience here.

Maggie: *The best bet is to approach the project with a much longer deadline than planning to sell everything within a month.*

Rule of thumb: On choice items, sell them singly. On routine items, place them in larger groups. You'll see that auction houses often do it this way, too: adding a less-desirable item to a hot one to up the price on the hot one, if the less-desirable one really has flaws.

You could ship and sell by the short box, but you won't be protecting the contents very well. You can support it by wrapping it tightly with packing tape. The problem is that, as with a paper-wrapped ream of paper, the simple flexing of the contents can break through the "wrapper" — in this case, the cardboard short box.

Moreover, if the contents are loose, they can shift and rub against each other, damaging each other in the process.

I have a letter in to a postal official about the Postal Service's Media Mail class; no answer yet. So in the meantime, you might need to ship it Bound Printed Matter. United Parcel Service automatically insures packages for $100, and you can buy additional insurance — but you can't ship UPS to a Post Office Box.

***However** you ship a package, you'll want to be able to track it.*

ENJOYING LETTERS MOST

David Dunbar
57 Olive Ave.
Larkspur, CA 94939

I am a second-year subscriber to your newspaper and enjoy the various sections and columns you guys work hard to put together — kudos to you all! But I must say honestly that I enjoy the letters section most of all.

Don Edwards' eloquent letter in #1562 ("Fortified with Vitamins and $5 ...") was a joy to read — just the right mixture of nostalgia, imagination, and intelligent analysis that belies our pursuit, as a group, of the comic art form. Although I am a few years younger than Edwards and grew up with Jack Kirby's *The Fantastic Four*, instead of Will Eisner's *The Spirit*, the sentiments he poignantly expressed represent us all — "just kids at heart ... with our comic books rolled up in our back pockets."

Please, no more commentary on "Media Mail." Enough, already.

The only way to send comic books in the mail is via Priority Mail with or without delivery confirmation. For $3.85 you can send up to three books, with plenty of cardboard, in a flat-rate envelope anywhere in the U.S., including Alaska and Hawaii, and it only takes two to three days. Period, end of discussion.

If the comics you are buying or selling don't merit this care and attention, then you shouldn't be buying or selling them. In more than 900 sales I have made on eBay, all sent by Priority Mail, only one package has been lost by the Post Office, and there have been only two reports of minor damage. Books over $50 and CGC'ed books can be sent in a Priority Mail Box, again anywhere in the U.S., for about $6.

Last, please don't publish letters by the same authors over and over again — let someone else have a chance to express their ideas and point of views. I've had more than enough of Chris Juricich's letters about what a successful dealer (he thinks) he is and how he has his finger on the pulse of the comic marketplace.

By the way, Chris — auctions without pictures get *no* bids.

Maggie: *Our policy is to try to provide a forum in which our readers can ask questions, supply points of view, provide information, and generally hang out on topics of interest. We don't run all the letters we get; there isn't room. But we occasionally go back through our files to double-check for letters that may have been left out in a period in which the letters column had to be cut short or in which there were letters we wanted to include but didn't have time to handle.*

For one thing, we do try to get answers to readers' questions and may set aside a research query so as to get more information.

And, of course, we had to make an extra effort to include Edwards' letter, long though it was, because we knew it would touch many of our readers.

CBG FOR ART'S SAKE by Chris Smigliano

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OH, NO. NOT THERE.
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ER... RIGHT. MITZY, YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT TAKING THIS WHOLE MEMORIAL THING TOO FAR?
NO, NO-- IT'S JUST THAT I OWNED LITTLE TING-A-LING SINCE HE WAS A KITTEN, SO I --
WAIT! TAKE YOUR SHOES OFF!! THIS IS HALLOWED GROUND!!
-BRIZ-03

http://pmayhem.com/brizy/index.html E-MAIL: bdahern@i2k.com

TRY THE LIBRARY

Dave Burns
6687 Parma Park Blvd.
Parma Heights, OH 44130

In a recent ***CBG***, the request was made to recommend to ***CBG*** readers graphic novels that are available at the local library.

In my case, I get many of the books I read at the local Parma Heights library, a branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library system. I also visit other branches in the system, since there are other branches near my home. I've also started working in downtown Cleveland and have begun visiting the Cleveland Public Library downtown, which has a large and fantastic selection.

Having said that, here are some of the graphic novels that I have recently enjoyed:

Batman: Hush #1
Fantastic Four: Imaginauts
Daredevil: Yellow
Spider-Man: Blue
The Authority (several titles)
Planetary (I forget the title)
Sojourn: #1 *From the Ashes*; #2 *The Dragon's Tale*
Ruse: #1 *Enter the Detective*; #2 *The Silent Partner*
The Tale of One Bad Rat
Hulk: #3 *Transfer of Power*; #4 *Abominable*
Left Behind: If you enjoy this graphic novel, try the series of novels.

Coraline by Neil Gaiman: not a graphic novel but an entertaining novel.

I'm looking forward to seeing what other readers recommend.

WHERE ARE THE COMICS?

Al Stoltz
1329 Superior St.
Havre De Grace, MD 21078

OK, I received the second updated info booklet about the 2004 Comic-Con International: San Diego the other morning and gave it a look. What I saw after two flips through was a tad upsetting to me, and I figured it was worth at least a letter to ***CBG***.

Let's do a checklist of what is within its glossy covers. Lots of mention about upcoming guests and past comic and media stars, check. Nice write-ups about the costume contest, check. Nice picture of the hordes signing in and paying bucks to get into the convention, check. Order forms for tickets, if you want to pre-buy them now, check. Picture of Stan Lee, check. Lots of other info and goodies about what a great event the show is — with one exception: no more than a few words about back-issue comics and their importance to the show.

"Not even a goofy picture of a dressed-up Captain America holding a Golden Age treasure."

The actual mention of old comics is on Page 15 and just states that more than 900 vendors sold everything from "comics to graphic novels." That is it! No mention or pictures of the comics. Not even a goofy picture of a dressed-up Captain America holding a Golden Age treasure for the camera. Comics retailers make up a decent part of the room. We pay serious dollars for the booths and would hope to have what we do represented in the very program that celebrates this medium — and I mean all aspects of it, and that includes the buying and selling of old comics.

While I have only been to the last four SD cons, I have heard the tales from many of the "old time" dealers that the show and room have been on the change for years. It seems they have felt that the shift to more media entertainment has pushed comics to the end of the interest spectrum at this show. Sure, the displays and exhibits that the multi-big-buck companies can field are prettier and nicer than most of the comics displays, but we are what we are.

I wrote a letter two years ago stating that this show is called the San Diego Comic-Con and was shocked that comics themselves were shoved to the far reaches of the convention center and felt as if they were not even part of the show as a whole.

The show *is* fun and *is* the biggest comics-related gathering, but it *is* losing the very original item that helped push this show to the heights it is enjoying now. Let's not forget to give the actual comic books a deserving push in the hype and ads that are sure to keep coming out over the next eight months.

I am not really trying to bash the SD staff as much as I am hoping to make the overall event even better. Let's showcase the very individual items that the show is supposed to bring attention to. Let's show some comics and some of the dealers' room in ads so maybe even more comics buyers will want to make that exciting trip to the biggest show on Earth.

INTERESTING

Delmo Walters Jr.
939 Woodycrest Ave., #416
Bronx, NY 10452

Rene Montoya in the Batman storyline is a lesbian? Interesting.

Last time her sexual persuasion came up, she was straight. She was dating a Coast Guard captain who got infected with the "Contagion" disease and died. Perhaps his death affected her so much she couldn't bear being with another man, so she switched teams. Nice job, Greg Rucka.

Holiday gift suggestions

1. Any *Bone* collection
2. Any *Pakkins' Land* collection
3. Any of DC's or Marvel's oversized (*Treasury*) new or reprints (especially DC's *Rudolph* collections)
4. Early issues (or a collection or reprint of) *Howard the Duck* (from Steve Gerber, to help show why the movie was made)
5. Any (or better yet, all) of the various *Usagi Yojimbo* collections from Fantagraphics and Dark Horse. (Stan Sakai rules!)

My most wanted:

The return of *Adventure Comics* from DC as an anthology title featuring Captain Marvel (Shazam!), long-forgotten heroes, and new creations! Why? Because I miss that type of comic book.

P.S. And *Ruse* from CrossGen will be missed!

— From Howard E. Michaels Jr.
706 N. Cottage Rd.
Mercer, PA 16137
Dec. 5, 2003

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758FB	7 5/8 x 10 1/2	Golden Age Comics - fits 800	$11.25	$37.00	$160.00
778FB	7 7/8 x 10 1/2	Super Golden Age Comics - fits 825	$12.00	$39.00	$170.00
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778HB	7 7/8 x 10 1/2	Super Golden Age Comics - fits 825	$11.00	$47.00	$160.00
825HB	8 1/4 x 10 1/2	"Large Comics, Mag. & Letter"	$12.00	$50.00	$170.00
858HB	8 5/8 x 11 1/2	Standard Magazines	$13.00	$56.00	$190.00
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700M2	7 x 10 3/4	Current Comics- 1990's	$10.75	$36.00	$155.00
725M2	7 1/4 x 10 3/4	Standard Comics - 1970's-90's	$11.00	$37.00	$160.00
775M2	7 3/4 x 10 3/4	Silver/Gold Comics - 1950's-70's	$11.50	$38.00	$165.00
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825M2	8 1/4 x 10 3/4	Super Golden Age Comics	$12.50	$42.00	$180.00
875M2	8 3/4 x 12	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter	$12.75	$43.00	$185.00
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CBG Reader Question of the Week #1568:

What comics story would you most like to have available in reprinted form? Why?

*Send your response to Oh, So?, **Comics Buyer's Guide**, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990, or to **ohso@krause.com**.*

WHY PICK ON FORTE?

Dennis Petilli
306 Terry Rd.
Smithtown, NY 11787

In ***CBG*** #1557's *Dateline* by Fred Hembeck, why is he picking on John Forte, artist on many 1960s DC comics?

I think the main reason he was used to draw *Superman*, *Lois Lane*, some *Jimmy Olsen*, and other books was that his style was close to that of Curt Swan. Al Plastino also drew like Swan at times.

Swan drew almost every *Superman*, *Action*, *Jimmy Olsen*, *Adventure*, *Lois Lane*, *etc.* cover and, many times, stories inside.

No one drew that many covers on comics — plus some *Detective*, *Batman*, and *World's Finest* — except Jack Kirby at Marvel. Kirby had his Marvel clones, be they Dick Ayers or George Tuska, plus early Barry Smith, Steranko, *etc.* Curt Swan had clones, be they Al Plastino, Jim Mooney, or John Forte.

Forte drew a good-looking Superman, one better than some of the Superman artists of today.

Wayne Boring was also a great Superman artist who also drew stiff figures, and his Clark Kent had weird glasses.

There is one question I would have liked to ask DC comics: When George Klein did not ink Curt Swan any more, Swan's art never looked good until Murphy Anderson inked it. They tried Jack Abel, George Bell, *etc.* Why didn't DC get John Forte, Pete Costanza, Al Plastino, Jim Mooney, Wayne Boring, *etc.* to ink Curt Swan? Kurt Schaffenberger had inked him a few times and it was good but not enough!

When Wally Wood worked at DC, they had him ink Jack Kirby, Gil Kane, *etc.* Imagine Wally Wood inking Curt Swan. Al Plastino and Murphy Anderson inked Jack Kirby on *Jimmy Olsen*, why not Plastino on Swan?

They even got Boring to ink the Superman face figure of a *JLA* cover by Mike Sekowsky. Why not Boring on Swan?

Instead, they used Vince Colletta or Mike Esposito.

Dan Adkins did a few Swan *Superman* stories — why not more?

Why not John Forte?

THANKS TO DAVE SCHREINER

John Holland
1200 Eagle Lake Dr., #99
Slidell, LA 70460

I never met Dave Schreiner but I can say that he had a big influence on me.

I think I probably only actually talked to him on the phone once, maybe twice.

For the one or two readers out there who remember seeing my byline on any comics-related work, I owe a big thanks to Dave. Dave didn't buy my first story; that was Bill and Nadine Loebs for a back-up story in the excellent and still-missed *Journey*. Honestly, I'm not sure if he bought my second or third story; it was either he or Kim Thompson from Fantagraphics for *Critters*.

But he was one of the first editors to buy work from me and, more importantly to me, to buy more stories from me. It's always a big high when you sell that story, but you wonder if it was just a fluke, a lucky break. Especially when that story I sold to Dave was illustrated by Sam Kieth.

OK, you think, maybe the art carried the story. But then he purchased another story from me, with art from someone that was as unknown as I was — well, it really helped my confidence level.

And then came the coolest part. Dave actually called me up and asked me if I could get him a story as soon as possible for an upcoming issue of *Death Rattle*.

I had mentioned in a letter to him with a previous story that I was working on another story to send him; you know you have to keep them rolling out. Now, that made me feel like a pro, an editor actually calling me for work. Dave Garcia was the artist for that story and he got it to Dave in time to make it in the issue of *Death Rattle*.

I'm sorry to say that I didn't know anything of Dave's health problems. I haven't talked or written to him since those long-ago days of *Death Rattle*. I wish (and I know, Maggie, you've mentioned this is something we should never put off) I could have told him how important he was to my career. (Hey, no laughing about that career now!) It's made me realize that I want to take this spot and say thanks to Bill and Nadine Loebs, who — as I said — bought my first story. And to Kim Thompson from Fantagraphics who bought numerous stories from me for *Critters*. And Kim also bought the first story from me that made it to a cover of a comic book.

"It's made me realize that I want to take this spot and say thanks to Bill and Nadine Loebs and Kim Thompson."

I've been out of the comics field for the last few years — just drifted away.

I still picked up a comic here and there, usually always making sure I got the newest issue of *Cerebus*, but, besides that, there didn't seem to be a lot calling to me. I even let my subscription to ***CBG*** lapse. (Gasp!)

But I seemed to have stumbled my way back into the fold.

I'm trying to resurrect a career that I'll be the first to admit didn't make headlines and best-selling comics the first time out. All I can hope for is that I find editors like Dave and Bill and Nadine and Kim who are willing to give a chance to unknowns like me.

CONTENT, NOT PACKAGE

Mignone Carrington
HC-01 Stainback Hwy.
Hilo, HI 96720

I write you this letter after reading many an issue of ***CBG***, articles and letters. Thus have I formed my opinion on the comics business.

Comics are ridiculously expensive. $2.99?

Holiday gift suggestions

Christmas, with its search for the ideal gift for each member of the family, is a traumatic season.

Five gifts?

If the fan doesn't already have Another Rainbow's volumes of Carl Barks' Duck stories, that would be a good place to start. Even if the fan isn't a devotee, these stories epitomize everything that's good about comics. They have strong, believable characters who behave consistently throughout. They can be understood by very young readers while still appealing to adults.

Beyond that universal comics gift, I don't know what to recommend. Anyone who's too wrapped up in comics (if such there breathe) ought to be getting anything *but* comics-related material, certainly as pertains to reading matter. It's hard to be specific because there's so much of it and what will be a revelation to one individual will petrify another with boredom. Adventure comics are largely myth-oriented, so maybe the best reading would be more down-to-earth, like history, biography, or even cookbooks. I firmly recommend any cookbook with a recipe for mock Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle soup.

My own philosophy about Christmas gifts suffers violent mood swings. Sometimes I think the only good presents are painfully practical. But the other side of my nature asks: "What gift could possibly be more worthwhile than some luxury the recipient would feel guilty about buying for himself?"

Anyone over the age of 7 must definitely avoid gift-shop knickknacks with a comic-book connection. Cute stuff goes into the garbage with the wrapping paper.

As for me: Just give me a golf swing with power and finesse that consistently puts my ball right on target. Is that too much to ask for?

— From Wallace I. Green
Nov. 9, 1990

What am I getting now that I wasn't getting when I bought comics for pocket change 15 years or so ago? Hmm, let's see.

Now, we have higher quality paper, better printing ability, a bajillion colors via computers. What did I forget?

Oh, yeah, cardstock covers so slick you could use them to toboggan down a paved street.

Seriously, do I need these things to enjoy a comic book?

If not, what *do* I need to enjoy a comic book?

Story. That means interesting characters, places, events, scenarios, conflicts, and drama.

Art. Drawings that catch the eye and are involving, making you double-take at panels till you turn the page. If story and art are what make a good comic book, what use do I have for computer-generated effects and glossy covers?

None.

Yes, I know they are cool, but why should every comic look like that? And I have to pay for it, if I want my little X-Men fix — or Spidey.

We often compare the U.S. comic market to that of Japan and say, "Why do they sell so many?" Or, "We're different from them."

Our tastes are different because of culture, but a comics reader is a comics reader. Period.

I read *Batman*, I read *Dragon Ball Z*, *Appleseed*,

Silent Moebius, *Spider-Man*, and *X-Men*. If I'm so different from them, how can this be? My point is: What works over there can work over here, if the U.S. companies would make an attempt to use someone else's example. A comic book is not made good by its package but by its content.

Marvel, DC, ya hear me?

Next, I have to speak out to retailers.

You have got to start listening more to what your customers say they want. Their buying pattern doesn't reflect opinion; do I really need to tell you which way to lean?

Buyers have little effect on the business outside of how they spend. If I stop buying comics in protest, will any companies care? No. When 20,000 people stop buying comics, someone's corporate wallet is going to start hurting.

Retailers must stand as the voice from the fans to the companies, and the companies must start listening and making use of what they hear. Free Comic Book Day? I use that to pick up after my dog.

COMICS FANS CAN HELP

Rich Thigpen
6000 Canterbury Dr., #I-219
Culver City, CA 90230

In response to your recent editorial about ways comics fans can help others, I'd like to call attention to the industry's only non-profit group that focuses on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues, Prism Comics. Formed last year by a group of longtime comics fans and professionals, Prism received its 501(c) 3 status this spring, with the following goals in mind:

• To educate the public about gay themes in comics

• To recognize LGBT creators and support personnel in the comics industry

• To promote the mainstream achievements of LGBT comics industry creators

• To encourage the exploration of LGBT themes by straight comics industry creators

• To encourage and facilitate LGBT-themed forums at comics conventions

• To provide forums for discussion of LGBT-themed comics content via printed publications and the Internet

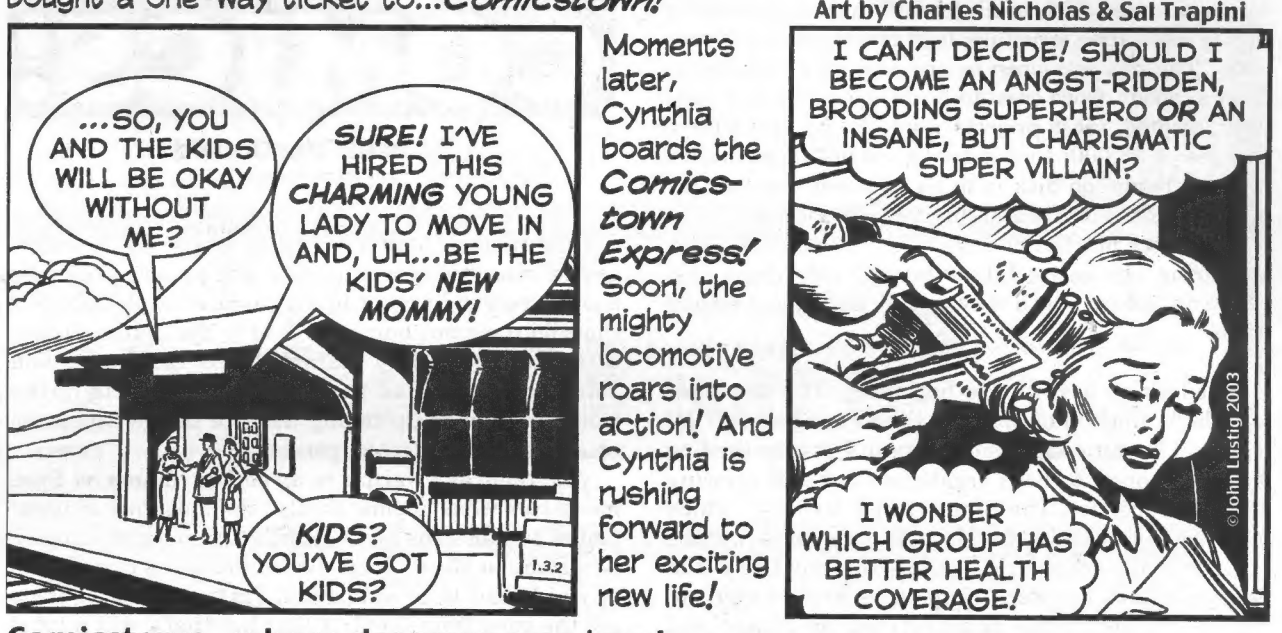
Why is an organization like this necessary in the 21st century?

Despite the advances the LGBT community has made over the years toward equality and visibility, homophobia still exists, and many people are unaware of the large contribution of LGBT creators to the comics industry. Although there are more than 120 LGBT creators with profiles on *www.prismcomics.org*, there are still creators who are afraid to reveal that they're lesbian or gay because they're worried about the consequences. There are still publishers who will pass on gay-themed storylines because they doubt that there's an audience for them.

Some in the comics industry believe LGBT themes and characters are not appropriate topics for a medium many still view as solely for children and teens. However, adolescence is a time when most people develop long-lasting belief systems and any prejudices they might have.

It's also a time when LGBT people become more aware that they're "different" and often feel isolated and alone. Showing this age group LGBT characters in situations they can relate to should help reduce much of the prejudice many LGBT people experience both as youth and later in life.

All funds for Prism's operations come from donations, ad sales, and merchandise sales from its website and convention appearances, so I encourage any readers who are interested to check out the website for more information and consider donating time or money to this charity.


LAST KISS
BY JOHN LUSTIG
Cynthia Swanswoop seemed to have everything a woman could want! And yet her life as an international spy, U.S. Supreme Court Justice and Mary Kay saleswoman left her feeling unfulfilled! And so, one day she packed up her cosmetics and concealed weapons; kissed her perfect husband and perfect kids goodbye; and bought a one-way ticket to...Comicstown!
Art by Charles Nicholas & Sal Trapini
...SO, YOU AND THE KIDS WILL BE OKAY WITHOUT ME?
SURE! I'VE HIRED THIS CHARMING YOUNG LADY TO MOVE IN AND, UH...BE THE KIDS' NEW MOMMY!
KIDS? YOU'VE GOT KIDS?
1.3.2
Moments later, Cynthia boards the Comicstown Express! Soon, the mighty locomotive roars into action! And Cynthia is rushing forward to her exciting new life!
I CAN'T DECIDE! SHOULD I BECOME AN ANGST-RIDDEN, BROODING SUPERHERO OR AN INSANE, BUT CHARISMATIC SUPER VILLAIN?
I WONDER WHICH GROUP HAS BETTER HEALTH COVERAGE!
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Comicstown...where dreams come true! (Paid for by the Comicstown Chamber of Commerce.)

WELL-DONE COMICS

Chris Juricich
1808 Chestnut St.
Berkeley, CA 94702

This is very strange ... but, when I started reading the "Volume 2" or how*ever* they referred to *Amazing Spider-Man* along about #31 or thereabouts, I told myself I'd continue reading the series until I lost interest.

Hmm. Odd thing?

"I've been continuing to read the series regularly, ever since Aunt May found out her nephew is Spider-Man."

I've been continuing to read the series now regularly, ever since Aunt May found out her nephew is Spider-Man.

Very odd. Issue #500 just came ... and I'm still reading.

Now, with *The Fantastic Four*, also a well-appreciated series, I've found myself, since Mark Waid has taken over the series, once again flipping through the pages on the rack — but I haven't actually bought the title. OK — I bought one issue. But ... I really think I'm going to start to buy the book regularly now. The answer, sports fans, is the simplest one in the book:

These are well-done comics.

Long and short of it — no exaggeration, just ... good funnybooks. I note with joy that Marvel still continues to collect these arcs with startling regularity and usually within scant weeks of a story arc's completion — which is not good news for my local comics dealer, because, frankly, I'll wait to buy that rather than a monthly snip and snip till the end. And *Ultimate Spider-Man*? Don't buy it — but *will* pick up the books I buy in collections or find in the bargain bins. Very good series! Oh, and let's not forget *The Ultimates* ... another fine Marvel funnybook, which, alas, doesn't come out with enough regularity for me.

Wow. Marvel is coming on strong — and it what? Took them practically 30 years to get my attention? Oh, well. Better late than never.

So kudos to Marvel for its great comics, if not its business acumen. ✦

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For our submission guidelines, please send a request (with a self-addressed stamped envelope) to Maggie Thompson at the address above or e-mail *cbgnews@krause.com*

An Epic saga

Advice for creators looking to break into the business

By **Heidi MacDonald**

Marvel's grand Epic experiment seems to have chugged to a conclusion of sorts. You may recall that the revival of the imprint was announced with much fanfare in January with a highly innovative structure, both creatively and financially. The line was open to any and all submissions, from anybody. Once creators were approved and projects accepted, those projects would be produced for a flat fee of $8,000. Comic books would be turned in "camera-ready" on disk in order to lessen the amount of work done in-house and further reduce costs.

But, after months of work and a handful of titles appearing, the entire line is being boiled down to a single anthology, which may or may not have a second issue.

But let's go back to the beginning. The new Epic was the brainchild of Marvel's then-President Bill Jemas, and he put a lot of effort into it. Initially, the line was to be open to both creator-owned and existing Marvel properties. The contract and terms — which were readily available on Marvel's website — weren't going to make anyone rich, unless you sold like a Jim Lee comic book but were competitive with or even superior to comparable deals offered by Image and CrossGen's Code Six line.

It all sounded too good to be true.

And, of course, it was.

A lot of projects — and I do mean a *lot* — were looked at. Two editors, Stephanie Moore and Teresa Focarile, were brought in to work on the line and, by all accounts, they spent a lot of time working with creators both new and established on refining pitches and scripts. Some books came out — Mark Millar's *Trouble*, John Jackson Miller's *Crimson Dynamo*, and Daniel Way's *Gun Theory*. Others — Mike Sangiacomo's *Phantom Jack*, Rob Worley's *Young Ancient One*, Jason Henderson and Greg Scott's *Strange Magic*, and Robert Kirkman's *Sleepwalker* — were announced. And countless other ideas and pitches were in various stages.

The sheer enormity of projects that came through the Epic doors at one point or another is still emerging. A lot of people didn't want to tell me, as a reporter, that they were working on a book for Epic, but their hopeful demeanors and hints of dreams coming true often gave them away.

As I've often said in these very pages, I'm not sure why so many people who read comics want to make comics, but Epic was the biggest shot at the brass ring for many folks. And it got a lot of people excited. Very excited.

So what went wrong? Perhaps the question is: What was the real goal of the Epic line? A way to create comics cheaply? A means to get new voices into the field? Bargain R&D for Hollywood?

Probably all of that. But the plan kept running into roadblocks on the roadmap to publication, to paraphrase G.W. Bush.

First, the creator-owned thing never panned out. "Creator-owned" is a risky business at both Marvel and DC and, with Marvel's continued shift toward becoming increasingly a licensing company, "creator-owned" wasn't going to fly. *Gun Theory* was originally a creator-owned project by Way and artist Jon Proctor that did come out but, according to the indicia, it was ultimately owned by Marvel. Chris Eliopoulos and John Romita Jr. had their own Epic projects in the works but ended up taking them to Image, when the creator-owned option evaporated.

And then, as I warned in an earlier column on Epic, no matter what anyone thinks, the slushpile of unsolicited submissions is no goldmine waiting to happen. According to Moore, some 700 submissions came in, all of which had to be evaluated. I'm sure a lot of them got the gong from the first line, but that's still a lot of work. Only two, *The Northwood Saga* by Marc Campbell and a Spider-Man "what if" story by Heath Amodio, were approved.

And then there were all the people invited to pitch. I have no idea how many people this involved but I'd guess (and it is only a guess) that up to a couple dozen projects were under serious consideration. And in many cases the writers were being asked to do rewrites before the proposal was green-lit.

Here, I must take a little detour and go back to the very beginnings of the new Epic. One of the oddest elements of the whole story is that the first batch of potential creators approached to pitch to Epic were drawn exclusively from the ranks of comics journalism. Our own John Jackson Miller, Newsarama's Sangiacomo, and Comic Book Resources' Rob Worley were all accepted, and reportedly Eric Moreels of X-fan, Barb Lien Cooper of Sequential Tart, and Mark Peyton of MillarWorld were working on proposals. According to Sangiacomo, some 150 scripts from journalists were turned in.

I guess this will always remain the biggest mystery about Epic. Why journos? Cynics speculated that it was a ploy to buy the loyalty of the press — you couldn't exactly report on a company you were working for. Others, including people at Marvel, said they felt it was just an opportunity to give some talented folks a chance to get their shot. Whatever the motives, three of those approached turned in projects that were eventually accepted. And, again, our own John Jackson Miller has gone on to become the regular writer on *Iron Man*, so I guess he's the big success story out of the whole saga.

But over the summer, things began to go sour with Epic, mostly with Jemas, whose position at Marvel was beginning to get rocky. The pile of submissions was slowly being waded through. And proposals that were accepted were going into what is known as "the editorial process." What is that? I'll give you a hint — it involves a lot of notes and lots of rewrites. It's pretty normal, unless your name is Bendis or Moore. Once again, from my own experience working with writers who are just starting out, rarely does a script spring goddess-like from the head of Zeus. There are tweaks. Patches. New spins. And it takes time. Sometimes, a *lot* of time.

Sangiacomo, who has a regular job as a syndicated reporter, detailed all this in an online column. At times, it became a tough slog.

And then a giant question mark appeared. Epic's fate seems to have been pretty much up in the air by the end of the summer. Everyone involved was in a holding pattern. No one at Marvel seemed to know exactly what was going on. And then the new regime came in at Marvel: Publisher Dan Buckley and financial operations head Gui Karyo. Almost immediately, there was an ominous sign: Submissions were no longer being accepted.

And just a few days ago came the news that the first issues of the next four Epic projects — *Phantom Jack, Strange Magic, Young Ancient One*, and *Sleepwalker* — would appear as a quarterly anthology. And, if sales were good enough, there would be a second issue. If. From a line that Jemas once hoped would include 60 titles, this was quite a downsizing.

On the surface, it's pretty obvious what happened: A new regime. An ambitious but unwieldy plan from the previous regime. Those kinds of projects are always getting shut down. It's business.

But it goes beyond that. I doubt that many of the planned Epic books would have appealed to my tastes as a reader but I do know first-hand what it's like to pour your heart into a project, only to have it killed at the last minute. It's devastating. And, if you've never had anything come out or were hoping this was your big break, I can only imagine the frustration and disappointment.

I think there were a lot of good intentions. But it wasn't meant to be.

I don't know how many prospective Epic creators are reading this, but I'll give advice I've given to many people over the years: If you put everything into an idea, and it goes nowhere, and that was your *only* idea — you weren't in it for the long haul, anyway. The people who end up getting their break somewhere else will do it, because they are in it for the duration. Breaking into comics isn't easy, especially for new writers.

It takes years of sticking with it and butting your head against the door. Epic was a four-lane highway headed straight for the promised land. But no one ever finished paving it.

In the meantime, the Epic implosion has highlighted for me, once again, one of the most problematic aspects of the comics business as it is run today: the resistance to creator-owned properties. I'll be examining that in my next exciting column. ✦

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Heidi can be e-mailed at ***comixace@aol.com****.*

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500	27.15	33.65	48.85	24.00
1,000	39.85	47.25	81.15	43.90
5,000	174.30	213.15	381.55	209.00
Pcode:	**SNC2**	**SNC3**	**SNC3R**	**SPPNCR**

REGULAR MARVEL

Fits1962-1972 Comics
7-1/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Resealable 3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
100	$ 6.20	$ 7.90	$ 11.25	$ 6.00
500	27.15	33.65	50.25	25.00
1,000	39.85	47.25	83.40	46.75
5,000	174.30	213.15	381.55	217.50
Pcode:	**SMAR2**	**SMAR3**	**SMAR3R**	**SPPMARR**

GOLDEN AGE COMIC

Fits Pre-1950's Comics
7-7/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil
100	$ 7.25	$ 10.00
500	28.15	39.05
1,000	51.00	66.75
5,000	237.60	308.55
Pcode:	**SGA2**	**SGA3**

DELL & SILVER AGE

Fits 1950's-1962 Comics
7-1/2 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil
100	$ 6.75	$ 8.70
500	27.80	34.35
1,000	49.60	57.45
5,000	222.15	264.70
Pcode:	**SDSA2**	**SDSA3**

TREASURY

Fits Treasury Comics
10-3/8 x 14-1/4

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
50	$ 7.65	$ 9.85	$ 8.65
100	12.75	15.20	15.70
500	55.20	61.70	58.00
1,000	88.10	114.00	92.50
Pcode:	**STE2**	**STE3**	**SPPTER**

MAGAZINE

Standard
8-5/8 x 11-1/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
100	$ 10.20	$ 13.10	$ 7.20
500	34.10	47.60	30.60
1,000	61.45	86.00	54.60
Pcode:	**SMAG2**	**SMAG3**	**SPPMAGR**

Large
8-7/8 x 11-1/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil NEW
100	$ 11.25	$ 14.50	$ 7.40
500	43.45	52.40	30.80
1,000	67.50	86.00	56.00
Pcode:	**SMAGL2**	**SMAGL3**	**SPPMAGLR**

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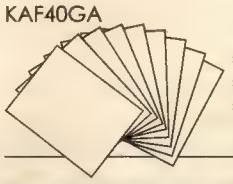
Prod. Code	Description / size (in)	*Grade	Gauge (in)	$/25	$/50	$/100	$/500	$/1,000
KCB30N	**NEW COMIC**	Economy	0.030	$ 3.55	$ 6.50	$ 10.05	$ 35.20	$ 65.10
KAF28N	6-11/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	7.15	12.80	20.00	80.65	142.20
KAF40N		Superior	0.040	12.50	23.10	40.35	175.15	304.70
KCB30R	**REGULAR COMIC**	Economy	0.030	3.55	6.50	10.00	35.20	65.10
KAF28R	6-15/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	7.15	12.80	20.00	80.65	142.20
KAF40R		Superior	0.040	12.50	23.10	40.35	175.15	304.70
KCB30DSA	**DELL & SILVER AGE COMIC**	Economy	0.030	4.30	6.75	10.60	42.90	72.60
KAF28DSA	7-3/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	8.60	13.65	21.10	85.75	150.65
KAF40DSA		Superior	0.040	13.35	23.45	44.35	185.75	322.95
KCB30GA	**GOLDEN AGE COMIC**	Economy	0.030	4.65	7.15	11.25	45.10	76.90
KAF28GA	7-11/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	9.20	14.25	22.40	90.10	159.30
KAF40GA		Superior	0.040	14.40	26.05	45.40	196.90	342.40



***Economy:** 0.030" Thick, non Acid-Free Grade. White on one side. For intermediate storage.
***Intermediate:** 0.028" Thick, Acid-Free, White on both sides. For long term storage.
***Superior:** 0.040" Thick, Acid-Free, White all the way through with 3% alkaline buffer for Indefinite Term Storage.

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	Pcode: DCOMP	**Pcode: DCOM**
	.030 gauge White Polystyrene.	White on both sides. Indexed.

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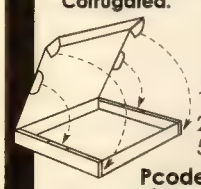

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10	$ 11.35	$ 16.45
25	21.30	30.90
50	36.00	52.20
100	57.95	84.00
250	119.80+frt	173.75+frt
500	199.65+frt	289.50+frt
	Pcode: MCOM14 7 1/2 x 10 3/4 x 1 1/4	**Pcode: MCOM28** 7 1/2 x 10 3/4 x 2 1/2

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(Comes with 3" Deep Cover).
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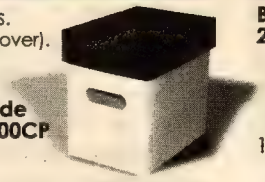

2	$ 19.25
5	38.50
10	67.65
25	137.50+frt

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10	8.10
25	15.95
50	27.50
100	49.50

Pcode XSP322

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2	$ 14.00
5	32.15
25	114.95
50	207.45
100	304.95+frt

Pcode XMAG150
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LIFE MAGAZINE

11-1/2 x 14-3/4 x 15-3/4

2	$ 15.40
5	33.45
25	123.20
50	215.05
100	312.20+frt

Pcode XLM60
Holds 60-65 Life Magazines or Treasury Comics.

COMPACT COMIC

7-3/4 x 11 x 15

2	$ 11.40
5	25.50
10	39.50
25	81.65
50	121.00+frt
100	217.80+frt

Pcode XCC200
Holds up to 200 Comics.

LONG COMIC

7-3/4 x 11 x 26

2	$ 14.75
5	32.15
10	64.15
25	128.80
50	171.25+frt
100	302.50+frt

Pcode XLC300
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Lightning strikes again!
Tony churns out several quick reviews!

Tony's Tips, Page 20

The creators, the characters, and the comics people are talking about today

IN BRIEF

Inkworks releases *Smallville* cards

Inkworks has released a trading-card set based on the second season of the WB show *Smallville*. The 90-card set includes episode cards, character cards, and three new subsets, "Buried Secrets," "Family Ties," and "Ship from Space."

The set will also feature such unusual items as one autographed card per box from one of 10 different actors on the show, eight different piecework cards with fragments of clothing worn by the actors and actresses, and a foil card nine-piece puzzle.

The *Smallville*: *Season Two* card set comes seven cards to a pack, with a suggested retail price of $2.29 per pack.

BULLETINS AT ONCE!

*Get breaking news on CURRENT COMICS right away. Visit http://**bulkmail.krause.com** to subscribe to our e-mail bulletin. Upon arrival at the site, choose "comics" as an interest, enter your e-mail address, and select that you wish to receive newsletters. You'll receive a weekly preview of upcoming sections — as well as instant news on breaking stories in today's comics hobby!*

Not snarling, drooling, mindless beasts

There's more to the menace in *Midnight, Mass.: Here There Be Monsters*

By **Nate Melby**

Fighting monsters is all in a day's work for paranormal investigators Adam and Julie Kadmon — especially in the seemingly sleepy little town of Midnight, Mass., where they live. DC Comics' Vertigo line released the original *Midnight, Mass.* in 2002, and now the horror-fighting couple will have their hands full when their arch-rival, Magellan, returns in the new six-issue mini-series *Midnight, Mass.: Here There Be Monsters*. *Midnight, Mass.* creator John Rozum told ***CBG*** that the new story takes place about a year after the first mini-series began, but, even though it can be considered a sequel, the story also stands alone.

"*Here There Be Monsters* is a follow-up to the events from #2-3 of the original mini-series," Rozum said. "The monster Magellan is still set on his goal of leading his people out of caves and ruins and into the modern world, where monsters can live in houses with running water and electricity.

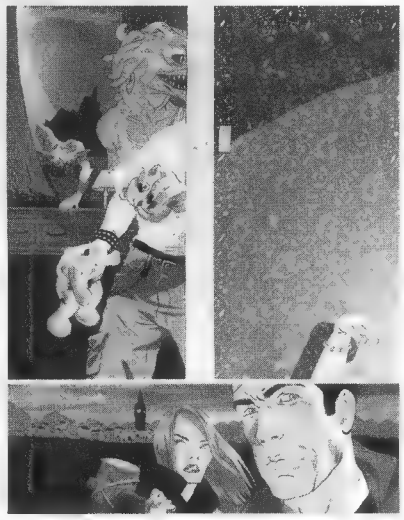
"Unfortunately for the people who live in Hope Falls, N.Y., he's planning on killing everyone in town so that the monsters can live there, instead. Adam and Julia Kadmon now have to stop Magellan and his hundreds of followers before this happens."

Following the events of the first series, the couple are back in top form. But there's a problem. Rozum told ***CBG***, "Their work has been piling up so fast as to have an impact their personal life together, and now Julia is finding herself filled with doubt, as she goes off to face the monster that nearly killed her at their last encounter. It's not as simple as the synopsis makes it seem. We meet a lot of monsters here, and they all have their own quirks, fears, and wants in the world — and they don't always mesh. I really wanted to pick up on ideas presented in the first mini-series and establish the monsters as well-rounded people, rather than snarling, drooling, mindless beasts who only seem to be interested in killing people."

Due in stores Jan. 28, the first installment of the series — with art by Paul Lee and covers by Tomer Hanuka — will also feature appearances by Magellan's crony Arturo and the Kadmons' assistant, Jenny.

Midnight, Mass. had originally been planned as a TV series.

"It's been a long time, so the specifics are lost on me, but it was about 13-14 years ago, when I was really trying to become the follow-up writer on *Doom Patrol*, when Grant Morrison was departing from that book," Rozum said. "I wanted to do something that was like *The Thin Man* movies, but catering to the paranormal. I thought having characters that were paranormal investigators would be a good way to tell a wide range of weird stories — and also, at the time, nobody was really doing much in that sub-genre. I first pitched it as a television series in 1990. The response I got was: 'Who's going to want to watch a man and a woman investigating the paranormal every week?' I hope that



person had a heart attack when the *The X-Files* became a hit.

"From there, *Midnight, Mass.* was supposed to be a spin-off from *Xombi*, the series I was writing at Milestone. It went down a couple dead-end roads after that, as well, and I let it sit for a while. After writing *The X-Files* comic book and feeling limited on it — because you only really get to tell one type of story, and it was never about the characters — I wanted to do it even more. *Midnight, Mass.* is about the *characters* before anything else. Things develop and change, and I don't need to tiptoe around whether phenomena are real. I can say that the monsters, ghosts, whatever are real — and, if I want hundreds of people to see them and be affected by them, I can make that happen without messing up anyone else's continuity or game plan."

Rozum said *Midnight, Mass.* had originally been conceived to feature a changing lineup of artists, and Lee was on that list. "There is a long list of people I'd like to work with, even if it's for an eight-page story, and I figured that this would be the best way to put a dent in this list. Paul Lee was one of the artists at the top of my list, and I feel very fortunate that he agreed to do this." ✦

INSIDE THIS SECTION

- **Tony's Tips** by Tony Isabella.....20
- **Reading Room**.....22
- **Comics Guide** by Maggie Thompson.....24

An Epic cutback

Line shrinks to anthology title within a year

By **Nate Melby**

With three titles already in stores, Marvel has scaled back its Epic line for 2004 to an anthology scheduled to ship in February. The anthology comes out a year after the original announcement that Marvel would revive the 1980s imprint edited by Archie Goodwin.

Word of the new Epic line had spread in February, and a March 26 press conference provided more details. Marvel President and COO Bill Jemas said, "Epic is a new imprint, intended to open the gates of Marvel to new ideas, new concepts, and new creators who otherwise couldn't get published by Marvel." The first title of the line was *Trouble* by Mark Millar and Terry and Rachel Dodson.

The only people who ended up with a chance to work for the line were either established comics professionals or comics journalists, and news of the cutback has led one of the Epic creators to take his project elsewhere. *Phantom Jack* writer Mike Sangiacomo told ***CBG*** that he will take the series to Image but remains appreciative of Marvel's giving him the opportunity.

***Gun Theory* is still on the schedule.**

"I'll always be grateful to Marvel for getting me off my duff to actually write a comic book," Sangiacomo told ***CBG***. "Had they not proffered the invitation, I would have likely never done it.

"Sadly, the grand Epic experiment crashed and burned under its own weight. Under former President Bill Jemas, Epic was an incredible idea to invigorate the writers' base at Marvel. There was a tendency to go for a story formula that ultimately proved unwieldy."

So far, only three titles have been published under the new Epic imprint: *Trouble*, John Jackson Miller's *Crimson Dynamo*, and Daniel Way's *Gun Theory*.

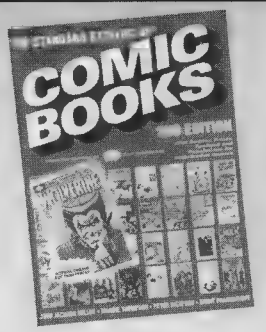
Marvel's website had provided guidelines for general submissions to the project, including a release, a work-for-hire agreement, and a tax form; writing submissions were to be in the form of a 22-page script; and the budget for each issue was an initial $8,000 for the complete package.

The three remaining titles — *Young Ancient One*, *Strange Magic*, and *Sleepwalker* — will get a shot at being seen by the public at least once, but Marvel said it will wait to see sales figures before it commits to a second issue of the anthology. If it does well, Marvel has indicated it may be released as a quarterly. Epic Editor Stephanie Moore told creators that they would be paid for two issues regardless of whether a second issue is published.

Since *Phantom Jack* had already been delayed, Sangiacomo told ***CBG*** that he was not prepared to wait any longer. "After Jemas, Marvel lost interest in the project. First, they cut off all new submissions and announced that only the four greenlighted projects would begin in February, my fourth delay. Then, on Friday afternoon Nov. 7, we creators received a cursory e-mail saying that the first issues of all four comics would be jammed into a single anthology. Also, a second issue would only come out if sales permitted, and it would be quarterly.

"That's just slow suicide. I called Image, and they couldn't be nicer. They agreed to publish the series, and the terms sounded good to me. At least, all the work done by the *Phantom Jack* team would be seen." ✦

NOW SPEAKING



We're continuing to discuss the new *Standard Catalog of Comic Books* 2nd Edition (shipping now!) and all things comics-related on your radio dial (well, some of your radio dials).

In the coming weeks, tune into coauthor John Jackson Miller on:

November 25

Ottawa, Ontario: CFRA 580 AM, 10 p.m. ET

December 1

Tacoma, Wash.: KLAY 1180 AM, 3 p.m. PT

More program notes to come — please tune in!

IN BRIEF

Marvel creates international division

In a move to increase its international presence, Marvel Comics has hired Bruno Maglione as the president of its new international division.

Maglione, who brings more than 15 years of experience to the assignment, will work to develop Marvel's overall presence in international markets. He will be based in London and will report directly to Marvel CEO Allen Lipson.

NEW COMICS shipping Nov. 30-Dec. 6

The following information is taken from publisher and distributor solicitations and updates and is as accurate as possible at press time. Check with your local retailer to find out what day new comics go on the shelves. Comics that are delayed or rescheduled will be tracked in future *CBG Calendars*.

Note: ✪ indicates a rescheduled comic book that appeared in a previous *CBG Calendar*.

A.D. Vision

Full Metal Panic: Manga Vol. 2 TP, $9.99

Archie Comic Publications

Archie #543, $2.19
Laugh Digest #189, $2.39
Veronica #147, $2.19

Dark Horse

Hellsing Vol. 1 TP, $13.95
Oh My Goddess! #104, $3.50
Star Wars: Empire #16, $2.99
Syn #5, $2.99

DC Comics

Action Comics #810, $2.25
Astro City/Arrowsmith, $2.95
Authority Vol. 2 #8, $2.95
Bad Girls #5, $2.50
Batman: City of Light #3, $2.95
Batman: Hush Vol. 2 HC, $19.95
Detective Comics #789, $2.75
Formerly Known As The Justice League #6, $2.50
Hawkman #22, $2.50
JSA: All-Stars #8, $2.50
Justice League Adventures #26, $2.25
Looney Tunes #109, $2.25
Mad Magazine #437, $3.50
Plastic Man #1, $2.50
Thundercats: Origins - Heroes and Villains #1, $3.50
Y: The Last Man #17, $2.95

Gemstone Publishing

Donald Duck Adventures Vol. 3 TP, $7.95

Image Comics

Blokhedz #2, $2.95
Frankenstein Mobster #1, (two covers $2.95)
✪ *G.I. Joe* #24, (two covers $2.95) (Nov. 9-15)
✪ *Invincible* #7, $2.95 (Sep 7-13)
✪ *PvP* #5, $2.95 (Nov. 23-29)
Rex Mundi #9, $2.95
Romp One Shot, $5.95
Street Fighter #4 , $2.95
Street Fighter #4, (two covers $2.95)
Walking Dead #3, $2.95

Marvel Comics

✪ *Crew* #7, $2.99 (Nov. 2-8)
✪ *Crimson Dynamo* #4, $2.50 (Nov. 23-29)
Dr. Octopus Negative Exposure #3, $2.99
Elektra #30, $2.99
Eternal #6, $2.99
Exiles #38, $2.99
Incredible Hulk #64, $2.25
Sentinel #10, $2.99
Spider-Girl #67, $2.99
Supreme Power #5, $2.99
Thanos #3, $2.99
Thor #72, $2.99
✪ *Ultimate Adventures* #6, $2.99 (Sep 7-13)
Ultimate Spider-Man #50, $2.99
X-Men Legends Vol. 4: Hated & Feared TP, $19.99

Rebellion

2000 AD #1363, $3.75
2000 AD #1364, $3.75
Judge Dredd Megazine #212, $10.99

Viz

Animerica December 2003 Vol. 11 #12, $4.95
Shonen Jump Vol. 2 #1, $4.95

NOW APPEARING!

November 29

Alex Ross (*Mythology, JLA: Liberty and Justice*) and **Greg Horn** (covers for *Elektra* and *Emma Frost*) at Buy Me Toys.com, Scottsdale Mall, South Bend, **Indiana**. Call (574) 291-2041 for times.

December 6

Bob Almond (*Black Panther, JSA All-Stars*) and **Craig Rousseau** (*Perhapanauts, Batman Beyond*) at New England Comics, 732 Washington St., Norwood, **Massachusetts** 02062, from noon to 2 p.m.

Gallery Showing Oct. 18-Dec. 31

The Art of Insight Studios at True Believers Comics & Gallery, 435 S. Guadalupe, Santa Fe, **New Mexico** 87501. Exhibit hours: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

Shi comes to Dark Horse

Mini-series celebrates a decade for the warrior

Just in time for its 10th anniversary, Billy Tucci's *Shi* will be coming to Dark Horse in a new series, *Shi: Ju-Nen*.

The four-issue mini-series, due in stores in spring, revolves around Ana Ishikawa — better known as Shi — an avenging angel torn between two ways of life.

In *Shi: Ju-Nen*, Tucci returns to the character that made him known in comics. This is also his first full mini-series following several film projects, including his award-winning short film, *some trouble of a SeRRious nature*.

"I'm thrilled to have Ana and this mini-series at Dark Horse," Tucci said. "The success of their Shi statue, which sold out before its release, was amazing, and I think it's just the tip of the proverbial iceberg for what we will accomplish together. Dark Horse President Mike Richardson and his team have just been amazing to work with, and, since *Shi* has always been something of a dark horse in the comic book world, I think it's a great fit."

Richardson said, "I've known Billy for many years and am glad for the chance to finally work together. We are proud to have this classic character become part of the Dark Horse family."

In *Shi: The Way of the Warrior* #1 (Mar 94), released under the Crusade imprint, Tucci (with a hand from writer Peter Gutierrez) introduced the young woman in a story in which she came to New York to avenge the murders of her father and brother. Now, 10 years have passed since introduction of the shadow war, which has raged for hundreds of years between the warrior monks of the Kyoto and Nara Sohei, direct descendants of Japan's greatest samurai. Things have changed. The Narans have finally been defeated, and the Kyoto Sohei are about to rub it in — with the encouragement of the Yakuza and with potentially disastrous consequences. Once again, Ana Ishikawa will don the guise of Shi, death incarnate, to try to prevent disaster. ✦

CONFIRMED SHIPPING

They're out there: We have received confirmation that the following titles have shipped and should be available in stores. This reflects shipping information received through November 14:

Aardappel Comics: *Swab Team* #1, $3.50 (Nov. 23-29)

About Comics: *Licensable Bear* #1, $2.95 (Nov. 23-29)

AC Comics: *Femforce* #121, $6.95 (two Sp Ed $9.95)
Men of Mystery #42, $6.95 (Sep)

Airwave Comics: *Yets* #1, $3.50 (Nov)

Ait/Planetlar: *Codeflesh TP*, $12.95 (Nov)

Antarctic Press: *Pose File Monthly* #4, $4.95 (Nov)

Archie Comic Publications: *Archie and Friends* #77, $2.19 (Nov. 9-15)
Betty #132, $2.19 (Nov. 9-15)
Betty & Veronica Digest #143, $2.39 (Nov. 9-15)
Jughead's Double-Digest #99, $3.59 (Nov. 9-15)

Avatar Press: *Frank Miller's Robocop* #3 (of 9), (two covers $3.50) (Sep)
Joe Lansdales Drive-In #1, $3.50 (Sp. Ed. $3.95) (Oct)

Beckett Entertainment: *Terminator 3 Fragmented* #5, $5.95 (Nov)

Black Library: *Warhammer Monthly* #74, $3.50 (Nov)

Brain Scan Studios: *Touch of Death* #2, $2.50 (Nov)

CrossGen: *First* #37, $2.95 (Nov. 2-8)
Mystic #42, $2.95 (Nov. 2-8)
Negation #24, $2.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Path #20, $2.95 (Nov)
Ruse #25, $2.95 (Nov)
Sigil #42, $2.95 (Nov. 9-15)

Dark Horse: *Astro Boy Vol. 20 TP*, $9.95 (Oct. 5-11)
Blade of the Immortal #84, $2.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Conan the Legend One-Shot, $0.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Ghost In The Shell 2: Man-Machine Interface #9, $3.50 (Oct. 12-18)
Pete Von Sholly's Morbid TP, $14.95 (Oct. 5-11)
Ring Vol. 1 TP, $14.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Syn #3, $2.99 (Oct. 5-11)
Ultraman Tiga #3, $3.99 (Oct. 26-Nov. 1)

DC Comics: *Adventures of Superman* #622, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Aquaman #12, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Batgirl: Year One TP, $17.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Batman: Child of Dreams SC, $19.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Batman: Death and the Maidens #4, $2.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #173, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Demon: Driven Out #3, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Doctor Fate #4, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Elfquest Archives Vol. 1 HC, $49.95 (Nov. 23-29)
Elfquest Wolfrider Vol. 2 TP, $9.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Fables #19, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Fallen Angel #5, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Gen 13 #15, $2.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Gotham Central #13, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Green Arrow #32, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
H-E-R-O #10, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
JSA #54, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Legion #26, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Mad About Comic Strips TP, $12.95 (Nov. 2-8)
Mad Magazine #436, $3.50 (Nov. 2-8)
Nightwing #87, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Robotech: Love and War #6, $2.95 (Nov. 2-8)
Scooby-Doo #78, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Sgt. Rock: Between Hell and A Hard Place HC, $24.95 (Oct. 19-25)
Stormwatch: Team Achilles #17, $2.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Superman & Batman Generations: III #11, $2.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Teen Titans #5, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Thundercats: Hammerhands Revenge #2, $2.95 (Nov. 9-15)

Digital Webbing: *Shades of Blue The New Series* #4, $2.95 (Oct. 19-25)

Dork Storm Press: *PS238* #4, $2.99 (Aug. 17-23)

Drawn & Quarterly: *Fair Weather SC*, $16.95 (Nov)
Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography HC, $24.95 (Sp Ed $39.95) (Aug 31-Sept 6)

Dreamwave: *Transformers: Armada* #17, $2.95 (Nov)
Transformers: War Within Vol. 2 #2, $2.95 (Nov)

Empty Sky: *Paleo Tales: Late Cretaceous* #7, $2.95 (Oct)

Fanboy Entertainment: *Angel's Wing* #5, $2.99 (Oct. 5-11)

Fantagraphics Books: *Head* #5, $3.50 (Sep)
Megamanga Vol. 1: Sex-Philes TP, $15.95 (Oct)
Megamanga Vol. 2: S&M University TP, $13.95 (Oct)

Highwater Books: *Col-Dee GN*, $8 (Sep)

I Books: *Amelia Rules: The Whole Worlds Crazy TP*, $17.95 (Oct)
Terminator 2: Judgment Day Official GN Adaptation, $9.95 (Oct)
Yossel: April 19 1943 HC, $24.95 (Oct)

IDW Publishing: *CVO: Covert Vampiric Operations Artifact* #2, $3.99 (Nov)

Image Comics: *Battle of the Planets: Manga* #2, $2.99 (Nov)
Capes #2, $2.95 (Oct. 5-11)
Darkness Vol. 2 #, $2.99 (Oct)
G.I. Joe #23, (two covers $2.95) (Oct. 5-11)
Invincible #6, $2.95 (Oct. 12-18)
Jack Staff #4, $2.95 (Aug 3-9)
Legacy #3, $2.95 (Aug 31-Sept 6)
Sei: Death and Legend GN, $6.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Trakk Monster Hunter #1, (two covers $2.95, Sp Ed $14.95) (Sep. 21-27)
Trakk: Monster Hunter Convention Exclusive Ashcan, $4.95 (Nov. 23-29)
Walking Dead #2, $2.95 (Nov. 2-8)

Imperium Comics: *Trailer Park of Terror* #3, $2.95 (Aug)

Kenzer & Company: *Knights of the Dinner Table* #85, $3.99 (Nov)
Knights of the Dinner Table Everknights #9, $2.99 (Nov)
Knights of the Dinner Table: Illustrated #28, $2.99 (Nov)

Marvel Comics: *Avengers* #73, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Captain America #20, $2.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Fantastic Four #506 (#77), $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Gun Theory #2 (of 4), $2.50 (Sep 14-20)
Incredible Hulk #63, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Iron Man #74, $2.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Kingpin #6, $2.50 (Nov. 9-15)
Marvel 1602 #4, $3.50 (Nov. 9-15)
New Mutants #7, $2.50 (Nov. 2-8)
Nyx #2, $2.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Punisher #35, $2.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Punisher Vol. 5: Streets of Laredo TP, $17.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Spectacular Spider-Man #6, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Thanos Vol. 3: Marvel Universe the End TP, $16.99 (Nov. 9-15)
Ultimate Six #4, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Ultimate X-Men #39, $2.25 (Nov. 9-15)
Wolverine: Snikt! #5 (of 5), $2.99 (Aug 31-Sept 6)
X-Treme X-Men #34, $2.99 (Nov. 9-15)

Monkeysuit Press: *Adventures of Mia* #1, $3.50 (Nov)

New England Comics: *WW2: War In The Air* #1, $3.95 (Sep)

Now Comics: *Ralph Snart TP*, $24.95 (Oct. 5-11)

Oni Press: *Love Fights* #5, $2.99 (Nov. 16-22)
Queen & Country #20, $2.99 (Nov. 2-8)

Red Pill Productions: *Matrix Comics Vol. 1 TP*, $21.95 (Nov)

Shanda Fantasy Arts: *Furry Ninja High School Strikes Back* #1 (of 2), $4.99 (Jul)

Simon & Schuster: *Little Vampire Goes To School*, $12.95 (Oct)

Sirius Entertainment: *Dogwitch* #8, $2.95 (Nov)

TokyoPop: *Demon Diary Vol. 4 GN*, $9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Escaflowne Vol. 3 GN, $9.99 (Nov. 2-8)
Mars Vol. 15 GN, $9.99 (Nov. 9-15)

Viz: *Gundam the Origin* #8, $7.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Phoenix Vol. 3: Yamato Space TP, $15.95 (Nov. 9-15)
Wedding Peach Vol. 3 TP, $9.95 (Nov. 9-15)
X 1999 Vol. 12 TP Movement, $9.95 (Nov. 9-15)

NEW COMICS shipping in DECEMBER

This list shows comics scheduled to ship during this month, that, to the best of our knowledge, have not yet had specific release dates announced. Be aware that comics can take two or three days to reach retailers once they are shipped, so comics that are shipped at the end of the month may not appear in your local store until early the following month.

AAA Milwaukee Publishing Co
Laughter of the Damned #4, $2.75

Aardvark Vanaheim
Cerebus #297, $2.25

About Comics
Superfolks Novel SC, $19.95

Abstract Studios
Strangers In Paradise Vol. III #62, $2.95

AC Comics
America's Greatest Comics #7, $6.95
Best of the West #39, $6.95
Femforce #122, $6.95 (two Sp Ed $9.95)
Femforce #123, $6.95
Men of Mystery #44, $6.95
Men of Mystery #45, $6.95

Adhesive Comics
Too Much Coffee Man Magazine #19, $4.95

Airwave Comics
Molly Danger #1, $5.95
Mr. Magoo's Holiday Sp 2003 Flipbook & Dvd, $12.98
Mr. Magoo's Holiday Special 2003 Flipbook, $4.95
Spells #3, $3.50
Suicide Blonde #2, $7.95

Ait/Planetlar
Demo #2, $2.95
Giant Robot Warriors GN, $12.95
Scurvy Dogs #3, $2.95

Alchemy Texts
Loxley Honor Among Thieves One Shot, $3.50

Alternative Comics
8 1/2 Ghosts One-Shot, $3.95
A Sort of Homecoming #2, $3.50

Amaze Ink (Slave Labor Graphics)
Bear #3, $2.95
Chi TP Vol. 1, $8.95
Chimney 25, $3.95
Comic Book Heaven Vol. 2 #9, $3.50
Gloom Cookie #18, $2.95
Halo & Sprocket Vol. 1: TP Welcome To Humanity, $12.95
Little Scrowlie #4, $2.95
Nightmares and Fairy Tales #7, $2.95
Outlook: Grim #3, $2.95
Patty Cake & Friends Vol. 2 #10, $4.95

Angel Gate Press
Black Tide #9, (two covers $2.95)

Angry Naked Comics
Patchouli One-Shot, $3.95

Antarctic Press
Assembly #2, $3.50
Gold Digger #48, $2.99
Gold Digger Gold Brick Coll TP Vol. 3, $50.00
Legends From Darkwood #1, $3.50
Luftwaffe 1946 #15, $5.95
Luftwaffe 1946 Pkt Manga Vol. 2, $9.99
Mangazine #50, $9.99
Neotopia Masterpiece Ed HC, $34.95 (Sp Ed $39.95)
Ninja High School #112, $3.50
Rehd #3, $2.99
Shoujo #4, $5.95
Twilight X Pkt Manga #3, $9.99
Twilight X: Storm #6, $3.50

Antimatter/Hoffman International
Mike Hoffman's Lost Worlds of Fantasy & Sci-Fi #8, $2.95
Wild World of Gus Finkelstein #4, $2.95

APC
Assassin School Vol. 1 TP, $19.95
Darkham Vale #6, $3.50
Darkham Vale Vol. 1 TP, $19.95
Digital Graffiti #2, $3.50
Faro Korbit #1, $3.50
Monster Club Vol. 2 #1, $3.50
Neutral World #2, $3.50
Slaughter #2, $3.50

Arcana Studio
Kade Pursuit #1, $2.95

Archaia Studios Press
Artesia Afire #6, $3.95

Archangel Studios
Red Star Vol. 2 #5, $2.99

Ariel Press
Raven #7, $1.95

Astonish Comics
Dreamland Chronicles #1, $3.50
Land of the Sokmunster SC, $9.95

Avatar Press
Alan Moore's The Courtyard Companion, $9.95
Alan Moore's The Courtyard TP, $6.95 (HC Set $34.95)
Alan Moore's Yuggoth Cultures Necrocomicon, $4.95
Frank Miller's Robocop #6, (two covers $3.50)
Joe Lansdale's Drive-In #3, $3.50 (Sp Ed $3.95)
Mark Millar's The Unfunnies #1, (two covers $3.50)
Steven Grant's My Flesh Is Cool #1, (two covers $3.50)
Threshold #52, (two covers $4.95; Sp Ed $6.00)

Axiom
Gun Fu: Lost City #2, $3.50 (Sp Ed $5.00)

Basement Comics/Amryl Entertainment
Cavewoman: The Movie Sp Ed , $8.95
Mike Hoffman's Lost Worlds of Fantasy & Sci-Fi Sp Ed #7 , $8.95
Mike Hoffman's Monsters & Maidens Sp Ed #2 , $8.95
Octavia Sp Ed #2 , $8.95
Razor Urban Goth Prequel Ed, $2.95
Wild World of Gus Finkelstein Sp Ed #3 , $8.95

Beckett Entertainment
Ruule: Ganglords of Chinatown #2, $5:95
Terminator 3: Fragmented #6, $5.95

Bighead Press
Drug War Carol GN, $5.95

Black Library
Bloodquest Vol. 3 TP, $10.99
Inferno! Magazine #40, $6.95
Warhammer Monthly #76, $5.95

Black Sheep Comics
Waterfall #1, $2.95

Black Swan Press
Vampire Legends #1, $7.00

Blind Wolf Comics
Eagle All-Star: Torch of Liberty One Shot, $2.95

Blue Line Production
Ashley Dust Complete TP, $14.95

Bob House Comics
Spirit & Image #1, $2.95

Bongo Comics
Bart Simpson Comics #15, $2.99
Simpsons Comics #89, $2.99

Bon-Vue Entertainment
Wormwood #1, $9.95

C.A.M. Press
Spark Generators Vol. 2 TP, $13.95

Carnopolis
Carnopolis #1, $6.00

Cartoon Books
Bone #55, $2.95

Castle Rain Entertainment
Jack The Lantern #4: The Quest, $3.00

Centurion Premiere/Hoodoo Graphics
21st Centurions #0, (two covers 7.95)

Checker Book Publishing Group
Alex Raymond's Flash Gordon Vol. 2 TP, $19.95
Milton Caniff's Steve Canyon 1948 TP, $18.95
Winsor Mccay: Collected Early Works Vol. 2 TP, $19.95

Cho-Zen Books
Shao Tzu, $6.95

Clamnut Comix
Mbleh! #3 (Of 5), $2.95

Classics Illustrated Jr. Publications
Classics Illus Jr. #540: Tinder Box, $3.99
Classics Illus. Jr. #530: Golden Bird, $3.99
Classics Illus. Jr. #536: Chimney Sweep, $3.99

Claypool Comics
Deadbeats #63, $2.50
Elvira #128, $2.50

Comicsone.Com
Black Leopard GN #2, $14.95
Bride of Deimos GN #6, $9.95
Now GN #1, $9.95
Saint Legend GN #7, $14.95
Storm Riders Part 2: Invading Sun Vol. 1 TP, $9.95
Weapon of the Gods GN #7, $13.95

Coppervale Press
Argosy Magazine, $12.95
International Studio: Holiday 2003/2004 Issue, $14.95
Starchild: Mythopolis II, $7.95

CPM Manga
La Blue Girl Manga Ed Book 5: Sinful Wrath GN, $16.95
Slayers Super-Explosive Demon Story Vol. 3 TP, $15.95

Crusade Entertainment
McCandless & Company: Crime Scenes TP, $14.99

Digital Webbing
Digital Webbing Presents #13, $2.95
Shades of Blue The New Series #5, $2.95
Thundergod TP, $12.95

Don't Eat Any Bugs Productions
R.Q.W. #1, $2.95

Drawn & Quarterly
Berlin #11, $3.50

Dreamchilde Press
Quantum: Rock of Ages #1, $2.99

Dreamwave
Darkminds: Macropolis Vol. 2 #3, $2.95
Duel Masters #2, $2.95
Mega Man #4, $2.95
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Animated #7, $2.95
Transformers/G.I. Joe #5, $2.95
Transformers: Armada #18, $2.95
Transformers: Generation One Vol. 3 #0, $2.95
Transformers: War Within Vol. 2 #3, $2.95

Drumfish Productions
Sentinels Book 1: TP Footsteps, $14.95

Exhibit A Press
Supernatural Law #39, $2.95

Fanfare/Ponent Mon
Mariko Parade GN English Ed, $17.99
Mariko Parade GN Spanish Ed, $17.99

Fantagraphics Books
Angry Youth Comix #6, $3.50
Black Hole #11, $4.95
Blowjob #8, $3.95
Boob Tube One Shot, $5.95
Comics Journal #258, $6.95
Dildo #3, $3.95
Foodboy GN, $9.95
Housewives At Play #11, $4.95
Maniac Killer Strikes Again GN, $16.95
Megamanga Vol. 5: Hot Tails TP, $13.95
Megamanga Vol. 6: Co-Ed Sexxtasy 2 TP, $16.95
Naughty Bits #39, $3.50
Prince Valiant Vol. 49, $18.95
Romance Without Tears GN, $22.95
Sex Warrior Isane #4, $3.50

Frightworld Studios
Fleshrot: Tales From The Dead Vol. 1 TP, $12.99

Future Comics
Deathmask Vol. 1 TP, $15.95
Metallix Vol. 1 TP, $14.95
Peacekeeper Vol. 1: Red Reign TP, $15.95

FWD Books
Styx Taxi: Pastrami For The Dead, $2.50

Geek Punk
Super Hero Happy Hour Vol. 1 TP, $14.95

Ghostwerks Comics
Champion of Children Afterschool Special #2, $2.95

Girl Twirl Comics
Jane's World #9, $2.95

Great Lakes Ninja Brotherhood
Infinite Kung Fu #6, $3.00

Gutsoon! Entertainment
City Hunter Vol. 4 TP, $9.95
First President of Japan Vol. 4 TP, $9.95
Raijin Comics #40, $5.95
Slam Dunk Vol. 4 TP, $9.95

Harris Comics
Vampirella Comics Magazine #3, $3.95 (Sp Ed $9.95)
Vampirella/Witchblade #1 Ltd , $29.95 (Sp Ed $59.95)

Heavy Metal Magazine
Conceptions #2 HC By Luis Royo, $14.95
Heavy Metal February 2004, $5.99

Hk Comics
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon Vol. 5 GN, $13.95

Humanoids Publishing
Amstergow In Eight Days GN, $9.95
Metal Hurlant #9, $3.95

I Books
Blacksad TP, $12.95
Icaro: Book 1 GN, $14.95
Quest For Aberzen Book 1 TP, $12.95
Terminator: The Burning Earth TP, $17.95

I C Entertainment
How To Be An Angel Vol. 1 GN, $12.95
My Codename Is Charmer Vol. 2 GN, $12.95
Ren-Ai Vol. 3 GN, $12.95
The Wanderer Vol. 2 GN, $12.95

Idol Fx
Drake: The Demon Box #3, $2.50

Imperium Comics
Trailer Park of Terror #7, $2.95

It's Adventure Time With
Secret Agent Corrigan #2, $7.95

Jackie No-Name Comics
Happy Hour In America #1, $3.50

Jetpack Press
Johnny Raygun #1, $2.95

Kenzer & Company
Dungeons & Dragons: Where Shadows Fall #5, $3.50
Fuzzy Knights TP, $9.99
Knights of the Dinner Table #86, $3.99
Knights of the Dinner Table: Illustrated #29, $2.99

Knockabout/Rip-Off Press
Freak Brothers Complete Ed Vol. 2, $31.99

Kyle Baker Publishing
Kyle Baker Cartoonist TP, $14.95

Last Gasp
Complete Dirty Laundry Comix SC, $16.95
Dreamland HC, $39.95
Naimah 2 SC, $12.95

Legion Of Evil Press
Chip Zdarsky's Prison Funnies #2, $3.00

Martyr Press
Rift #3, $2.95

MDC Comics
Gabagool! #4, $3.00

Mirage Studios
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #13, $2.95

Moonstone
Kolchak Night Stalker: Pain Most Human GN, $6.95
Moonstone: Mysterious Traveler Returns #1, $4.95
Mr. Moto: Welcome Back Mr. Moto #1, $2.95
Phantom Vol. 5: GN Valley of Golden Men, $6.95

Mu Press
Rhudiprrt Collection TP Signed Ed, $13.95
Rhudiprrt, Prince of Fur #10, $2.95

NBM
Diary of Molly Fredrickson Vol. 2: GN Peanut Butter, $9.95
Grin and Bare It #11 Magazine, $5.95
Magic Flute SC Library of Opera Vol. 1, $17.95
Rise of the Graphic Novel HC, $14.95
Rumble Girls Vol. 1: TP Silky Warrior Tansie, $9.95

Neko Press
Kickass Girl: Skeletons In Closet #2, $2.99
Mince #1, $2.99

New England Comics
WW2 Presents: Hitler's Special Forces #1, $3.95

New Flame Publishing
Now and Then #1, $2.95
The Drowners #1, $2.95

Now Comics
Vespers GN, $14.95

Overcast Comics
The Gift #3, $2.95

Plex/Fanboy Entertainment
Angel's Wing #7, $7.95

Pure Imagination Publishing
Complete Jack Kirby Vol. 5 TP, $30.00

Radio Comix
Furrlough #132, $2.99
Genus #63, $3.50
Mangaphile #22, $4.99

Rebellion
2000 AD Showcase #2, $1.95
Judge Dredd Megazine #213, $10.99

Red Robot Productions
Malinky Robot #1, $3.00

Rehab25.Net
Whisp Chapter 1 Spider Legs, $2.00

Renaissance Press
Amelia Rules!: Superheroes #2, $2.95

Rorschach Entertainment
Sprecken: Destiny Dance #1, $2.99

Rough Cut Comics
Rose Black GN, $12.95

Royal Academy Of Illustration & Design
Rumble Royale #1, $9.95

SAF Comics
Arethel Vol. 2: Other Side of the Medal HC, $12.95
Nick Vol. 1: Hey Nick Are You Sleeping GN, $12.95
Why Did the Knights Die Out GN, $12.95

Second To Some Studios
Fade From Blue #9, $1.99

Sentai Studios
Ninja High School: Timeblast #1 Video Game Comic , $9.95
Tomorrowman's Gigantic Super Special #1, $3.95

Shanda Fantasy Arts
Extinctioners Vol. 2 #13, $4.99
Four-Footed Furries #1, $4.99

Shooting Star Comics
Job Wanted #1, $5.95

Sirius Entertainment
Banzai Girl Annual #1, $3.50
Oh My Goth Presents Girlz of Goth Ltd Ed, $13.00
Poison Elves #76, $2.95

Skunk Comics
D7 Peacemaker: #1 Nightfall, $3.95
ITA: Code of the Dragon #2, $2.50

Ssscomics.Com
SSS Comics Presents: Eclipse and Vega #2, $2.95

Studio G
Aya: Zero Tolerance #2, $2.95
Rakan: Den of Theives #2, $2.95

TCZ Studio
Celestial Zone Vol. 2 #5, $9.50

Titan
Alien Legion: On the Edge TP, $16.95
Judge Dredd: Cursed Earth GN, $19.95
Transformers: Showdown GN, $19.95

Tony Raiola
Buck Rogers Color Sunday Pack #1, $130.00
Dick Tracy Large Feature Comic #9 Reprint Edition, $9.50

Top Shelf Productions
Mirror of Love HC, $24.95

Vamperotica
Babebarians #1: Art of Axebone With Cd Rom, $10.00

Vanguard Productions
Neal Adams' Monsters GN HC, $24.95 (Sp Ed $39.95)
Space Cowboy 2003, $4.95

Viper Comics
Dead At 17 #2, $2.95
Moon Rush #2, $2.95

Wingnut Games
Tony Digerolamo's Travelers #25, $2.99

Comics In Your Future

Publisher's Picks & Retailer Reviews

A number of publishers were recently asked to choose, from the material they have scheduled to ship in January, which titles they felt would be most worthy of the attention of readers and collectors. Participating retailers were then asked to predict how popular each title will be and to grade each preview from A+ to F, according to how successful they found it as a work of art or entertainment.

Retailer Panelists Reviewing January Titles

S.A. Bennett
Dark Star Books & Comics, Yellow Springs, OH

Cliff Biggers
Dr. No's Comics, Marietta, GA

Charlie Harris
Charlie's Comic Books Tucson, AZ

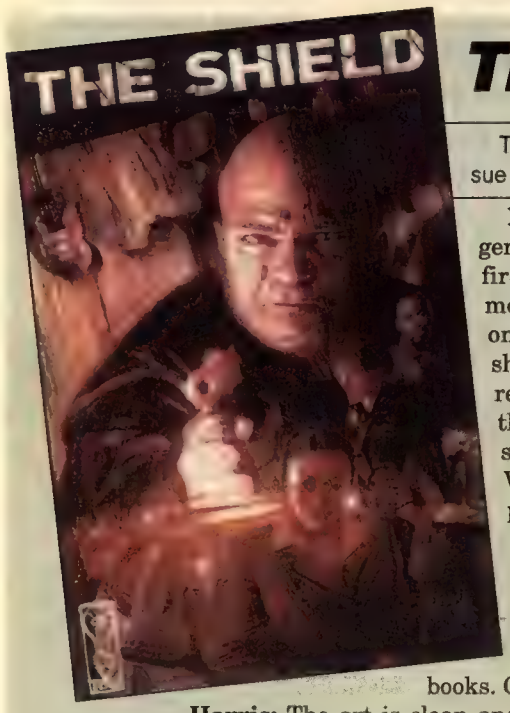
Phil Mateer
All about Books and Comics, Phoenix, AZ

Robert Scott
Comickaze San Diego, CA

Jeremy Shorr
Titan Comics Dallas, TX

The Shield: Spotlight #1

IDW
$3.99, color, 32 pgs.



The cops of the Farmington District have a drug bust go bad, a murder investigation stall, and a major traffic incident occur in the first issue of the series by Jeff Mariotte and Jean Diaz.

Bennett: Here's one example of two genres you just don't see much any more: first, a cop comic, the *CSI* books being more forensic science fiction, and, second, an adaptation of a live-action TV show that's actually on the air. (Younger readers may not be aware of "the curse" that says the comic book will come out six months after the show is canceled.) While it's as gratuitously violent and profane as the source material, the cooler medium of comics takes away some of the visceral charge of the source material. While technically a little rough, it's actually an improvement over the publisher's recent *CSI* books. Grade: **C**.

Harris: The art is clean and concise and the writing is clear and tight. As in *The Ultimates*, though, it's difficult to determine who the good guys are. Grade: **C**.

Biggers: Mariotte captures the personality of the ensemble cast well, and Jean Diaz does a laudable job of capturing likenesses without breaking the visual flow of the story in the process, but the comic book lacks the incisive ethical ambiguity that makes the television series simultaneously disturbing and engrossing. Somehow, the moral mood swings of the series come across as a bit flattened here, giving the comic book the feel of an episode synopsis; the nuances that magnify the intensity of the series are missing here. Still, it's enjoyable for what it is, and *Shield* fans will feel at home with the story. Grade: **B-**.

Mateer: Time was when any successful TV show had its own comics series, but, in the last decade, only the occasional fantasy cult series like *Xena* or *Buffy* has been able to breach the barriers. Now, IDW, having tasted success with *CSI*, has decided there's a market for police-procedural books on popular series, and a cult favorite like *The Shield* seems a logical choice. One possible pitfall is that the show's impact depends largely on the acting of Michael Chiklis, and that's hard to translate into comics form, but this is a perfectly serviceable (if not very surprising) take on the show and a welcome way to attract non-comics readers to the form. Grade: **B-**.

Shorr: If the reader has no experience watching the show, it sure seems like a generic cop story, complete with tough guys and tougher girls. Throw in a few drug deals (botched and otherwise), bad cops, and gun duels, and you have the complete formula. This one does seem to be a step above some of the other shows around, for whatever that's worth. Grade: **B**.

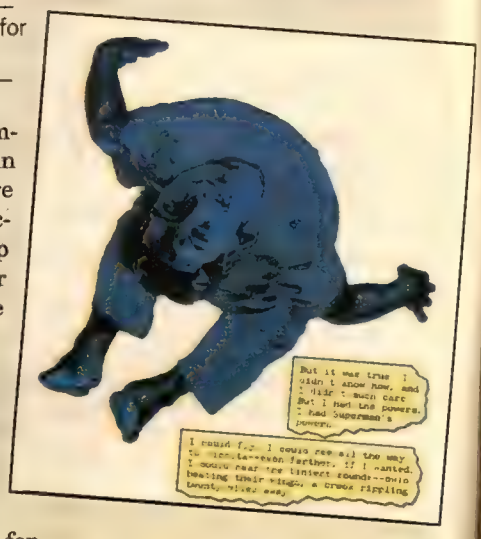
Scott: This is one of my favorite shows and, although mostly happy with IDW's *CSI* offerings, I was unsure that IDW could match the action and frenetic energy of the show while capturing the personalities of the characters.

PANEL'S GRADE **B-**

Mariotte does a laudable job of identifying the series' characters, and the art team delivers decent likenesses and high-action scenes, probably coming as close as is possible to an actual episode on paper. Grade: **B**.

Superman: Secret Identity #1

DC
$5.95, color, 48 pgs.



Kurt Busiek and Stuart Immonen examine what life is like for a "real world" Clark Kent, who has been teased about his "famous" name for years, until one night when he acquires super-powers.

Bennett: Here's another "what if Superman was really real" story, and, while this best-case scenario is pretty unlikely (it's never, say, Emimem who gains super-powers — though something that terrible is probably best left to the imagination of Garth Ennis), it's a nice enough fable that thinks some genre elements through — for instance, it makes a good case for superheroes having secret identities, as we watch the media feeding frenzy to have "the big get" of a real-world Superman. Grade: **B**.

Biggers: The Earth Prime concept gets a renovation at the hands of Busiek and Immonen — and the new construction is a real showpiece. The duo never let the story get too big or develop too quickly; they're diligently developing the story of a teen-age boy who has the misfortune to have the same name as one of the most famous fictional characters in comics. The twist is that he actually *does* develop super-powers — but Busiek isn't building the whole story on that twist. Instead, he gets it out of the way early in the first book, opting instead to focus on the ramifications. Grade: **A**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B+**

Harris: Busiek *loves* super-heroes. He's obviously writing his well-thought-out personal fantasy. As the hype says, Immonen's art has never looked better. Grade: **A-**.

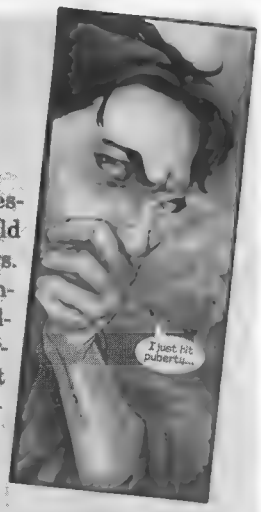
Mateer: This is well-trod ground about a super-hero's coming of age in "our" world, where the only such heroes are in comic books. What distinguishes it from similar efforts are Busiek's humanism and quiet optimism and Immonen's effective art; they offer a lower-key alternative to the jazzed-up cynicism and smartass takes of such creators as, say, Millar or Straczynski, who've worked with some of the same themes. Will the whole story hold up? Grade: **B+**.

Scott: This was an enjoyable "story," surprising to me because I'm not a Superman fan, with the only negative being that most of it was told in captions, which I generally find annoying, especially in this case, where the character is a bit of a whiner. However, the strong story and Immonen's equally strong art mostly overcome my caption peeve and, by story's end, it is forgotten, if not completely forgiven. Grade: **B**.

Shorr: What at first blush appears to be just another reality-based comic book quickly turns into an entirely different ball of wax. And it's a ball of wax with all kinds of unanswered questions. Which is a terrific place to be! Grade: **B+**.

Uncanny X-Men #437

Marvel
$2.25, color, 32 pgs.



"She Lies with Angels" begins the story of a couple whose relationship is threatened by their parents' opposing human-mutant views. The story is written by Chuck Austen with art by Salvador Larroca.

Shorr: It's a shtick by now, how the mutants are despised by every person on the planet. But it's still a good shtick, and The X-Men are going to stick with it as long as they can. This issue, we get some racial tension and a new mutant talent thrown in for good measure. It's a good start for a new creative team. Grade: **B+**.

Bennett: For the last year or so, the art on *Uncanny* has been both irregular and (to be polite) uninteresting, so the appearance here by Larroca is more than welcome. Of course, he's a master of the human figure, but what really shines here are the everyday details of the regular world. And, as always, Austen proves himself one of the best writers working today. Grade: **B**.

Biggers: Austen and Larroca present a pleasant enough interlude piece, but the problem is that *Uncanny X-Men* is an ill-chosen home for pleasant enough interlude pieces — particularly when the stars aren't members of The X-Men. Sure, there are lots of mutants in the Marvelverse — but readers who pick up *Uncanny X-Men* are generally looking for the core team, not for the B-team. This is the sort of story that should be spotlighted in a backup tale. Grade: **C+**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B-**

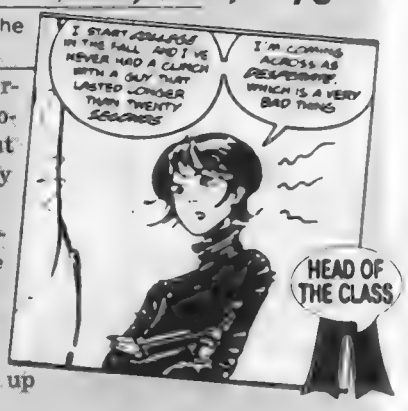
Mateer: The shiny traveling three-ring circus that's Grant Morrison's *New X-Men* has been leaving its older-sister title in the dust for years now, and this new story arc for *Uncanny* doesn't look to be changing things any time soon: new artist, old writer, and same old opening scenes, with noble mutant kids vs. mouth-breathing, bigoted small-town thugs. Next, we're promised a Romeo-and-Juliet mutant-human young-misunderstood-lovers story. Sorry, guys, but until you stop recycling 20-year-old Claremont plots and get a handle on the characters that doesn't involve arbitrarily changing them around every few issues, you're going to continue coming in a distant second-best. Grade: **C**.

Scott: I'm a huge Larroca fan, and he definitely delivers solid work here, but Austen really has a way of writing that makes me wonder why it takes so many pages for anything of substance to happen. That and the introduction of yet another mutant Guthrie, has me less than excited about subsequent issues. Grade: **C**.

Harris: Occasionally, writes a great chapter of a story, and rarely he writes a whole story that works well, but for the most part it's been a case of taking the bitter with the sweet. If this quality of art and pacing can stay constant throughout

My Faith in Frankie #1

DC/Vertigo
$2.95, color, 32 pgs.


I START COLLEGE IN THE FALL AND I'VE NEVER HAD A CLINCH WITH A GUY THAT LASTED LONGER THAN TWENTY SECONDS
I'M COMING ACROSS AS DESPERATE, WHICH IS A VERY BAD THING
HEAD OF THE CLASS

Mike Carey, Sonny Liew, and Marc Hempel focus on a young woman who has her own personal god. When she's ready to fall in love, she decides she doesn't need her protector any more, but the deity doesn't want to lose his sole disciple.

Shorr: One of the questions that everyone faces is where their faith comes from and how it might be reciprocated. This mini-series takes on that question head-on, no holds barred. Well-rounded characters and quirky art make this a solid choice from Vertigo. Grade: **A**.

Bennett: In tone, taste, and texture, this hilarious, literally blasphemous comic book screams not so much Vertigo as black-and-white, slice-of-life meets weird-fantasy alterna-comic. Except, instead of being half-baked and semi-professional, this is well-thought-out and razor-sharp in execution — though, if we're supposed to empathize with Frankie, it's hard to warm up to the over-indulged little brat. Much more sympathetic is the junior-league god Jeriven, who looks a little like what would happen, if Paul Pope switched to a TV animation style. Grade: **B**.

Harris: Who knew that Carey could write a cute, light-hearted, and fun story like this? Even if it doesn't stay this upbeat, with such likeable characters, the further adventures will be on my reading list. Grade: **B+**.

PANEL'S GRADE **A-**

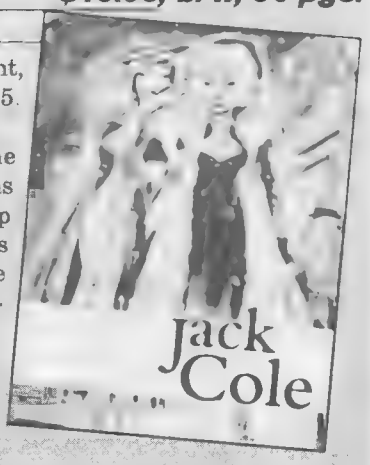
Mateer: Carey, with his work on *Lucifer* and other titles, has quietly become one of the best storytellers in comics, and Hempel has a similar reputation for brainy, entertaining work. You know all those non-super-hero-fan friends who don't normally read comics but would, if you could show them something they liked? This is a perfect book for them. Grade: **A**.

Scott: An interesting offering but a little herky-jerky in its narration and constant interludes. The interplay of gods and mortals is fun, although this title falls a tad short of those two, so far. Overall, the strong art supports a promising story and it's to be hoped that the series will continue to pick up steam. Grade: **B**.

Biggers: Clever, energetic, exuberantly offbeat, *My Faith in Frankie* is an unpredictable, inviting comic book that is almost impossible to put down, once you start the first page. Carey's writing is even more engaging than usual — his glib, witty dialogue really sparkles here — and the art by newcomer Sonny Liew evokes the best of Bob Oksner and Bill Watterson with a dash of manga thrown in for good

Classic Pin-Ups: Jack Cole

Fantagraphics
$19.95, b/w, 96 pgs.



Plastic Man creator Jack Cole's humorous pin-ups from such early '50s publications as *Humorama* are collected.

Bennett: With the current generation of "lad's mags" enjoying popularity, it's time to reexamine the men's magazines of the past in their proper historical context — *i.e.*, to look at girlie cartoons without fear of a feminist backlash. And, while Cole may not be the first artist you'd think of working in this particular format, naturally, he handsomely acquits himself drawing beautiful women and bringing out the funny. Mastering the severe space limitations of the one-panel cartoon isn't easy, but Cole makes it look that way. Grade: **A**.

Biggers: Cole was a fine cartoonist — that's clear from the art presented in this collection. What's also clear, though, is that humor is a product of its time, and much of what passed for humor at the time these gag panels were done is tired and clichéd by today's standards. Pretty to look at but not pleasant to read. This collection is of interest to Cole completists only. Grade: **C**.

Scott: Truly a fun collection. While some may point out the non-PC nature of the collected works, I'd say you'd have to work pretty hard to find anything offensive, and the humor holds up as well today as the day it was published. Grade: **A**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B**

Harris: It isn't fine art and it isn't sequential art and it isn't very humorous. The historical value is apparent, but the entertainment value isn't worth $19.95. Grade: **C-**.

Mateer: Cole's justly considered one of the masters of the comics medium, and these cartoons are historically important, since they bridge a gap between his earlier work on Plastic Man and his later work for *Playboy*. Basically, though, they're just PG-rated 1950s girlie-mag cartoons, more interesting for who drew them than for themselves. The production values on this edition are wonderful, and the women are undeniably pretty, but only major fans of Cole or 1950s "Good Girl" art will want to spend $20 on this book. Grade: **B-**.

Shorr: Fantagraphics continues its line of reprint books showcasing big-name artists from yesteryear. Cole's luscious girly cartoons certainly belong on the coffee table, to be enjoyed by a new generation of readers. Well done! Grade: **A**.

Strip Search

Dark Horse
$14.95, color and b/w, 128 pgs.

More than a dozen new creators' works are collected in this anthology culled from Dark Horse's online talent search. The creators include Ben Stenbeck, Nir Paniry, and George Pfromm.

Bennett: Anthologies may have fallen out of favor with the majority of fans, but, if they can be persuaded to pick this one, they'll find some righteously original material in a field in which "same old, same old" is the order of the day. Without question, the breakout star here is "The Mighty Skullboy Army," and, while the rest of the contents aren't quite up to its level, the stories here are always intriguing. There are definitely people I want to see more from. Grade: **B**.

Biggers: There's phenomenal material in here, but the book doesn't really coalesce. Oh, I know, it's the result of a new talent search, and, therefore, there's no thematic thread binding these stories, but such diversity not only virtually ensures that every reader will find a story that he really likes, but it also virtually ensures that every reader will find a story that he really hates — and, for a $14.95 entry price, most folks would prefer finding something a bit more focused. The big drawback? A lot of these stories could have benefited from editing; bad word-balloon placement impeded the narrative at times, and a few touchups could have helped. Still, it's an interesting new talent piece — but I'm not sure the content justifies the almost-15-buck pricetag. Grade: **C**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B-**

Harris: Amid the gratuitous violence, lame monsters, juvenile nonsense, blurry computer-generated chaos, and one Kirby clone, there are a few interesting pages. Emily Mann and Haven show promise; the rest just show mediocrity. Grade: **C**.

Mateer: It's best to approach a new-talent anthology like this with low expectations, figuring on a lot of promising-but-sophomoric vignettes and a few glimmers of real talent; that way, you're pleasantly surprised at anything better. That's harder to do here, since the reader has to gamble $15 up front. At a buck each, are these rookies worth it? Chabot's deadpan "Skullboy" is mordantly funny ("Skullboy ...," his teacher muses, "Is that French?"), and knows when to get off the stage. Harmon's "Sweet Tooth" shows a Michael T. Gilbert influence and stands out for knowing how to tell an actual story; so does the uncredited creator who contributes a Corbenesque (and Bradburyesque) robot tale. No question, at least a few of these people will be heard from again. Grade: **B**.

Scott: Raw talent is correct; this collection of uneven strips, most of which are much, much stronger in art than story content, was very disappointing, and it is difficult to believe that this was actually the cream of the crop. Grade: **C-**.

Shorr: Dark Horse's goal is to get these good folks some national exposure. And there are several contributors who turned my head. And several whose work did not. On the whole, it's an above-average group of artists and writers at work. And that, to paraphrase Roger Ebert, deserves a thumbs-up all to itself. Grade: **B+**.

Kiss Kiss Bang Bang #1

CrossGen
$2.95, color, 32 pgs.

Tony Bedard and Mike Perkins follow the adventures of a spy legacy in which the main identity is passed from agent to agent, further enhancing his reputation. The latest agent, however, is a woman who has to be trained by a sexist predecessor.

Scott: A few months ago, *El Cazador* wowed readers with its art but left them wanting more from its story. This time, with *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, CrossGen delivers a book that fires on all cylinders! Perkins' art is fantastic, and Bedard introduces an exciting cast and a dynamic story that hits the ground running at full speed. The tagline is true: Basildon is truly the spy you'll love to hate. Grade: **A+**.

Bennett: First kung fu, then martial arts, now spies — here's another fine addition to the new, non-Sigil CrossGen line. And I mean spies of the James Bond, Sean Connery subdivision, variety, so both the situations and characters are on the crisp Cold War side (bottom line: no bad guys bent on world domination with exotic pets), with plenty of period detail that'll put you solidly into the 1960s. Grade: **B**.

Biggers: In a recent issue of *007 Magazine*, someone involved with the production of *Die Another Day* mentioned that he had always imagined that James Bond 007 wasn't a single person but was a line of agents who used the same cover name; that's how he brought himself to accept the transition from Connery to Lazenby to Moore to Dalton to Brosnan. Well, that concept has also found a home in *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*. The concept is clever and well handled, although the relationship between the current Sir Charles and the Basildon-in-training, an American woman, seems like a reversal of the clever-but-underappreciated Fox series *Keen Eddie*. Basildon could use a little more build-up here — if you don't think of him as James Bond, you have trouble getting into the series — but, overall, it's another solid venture into a new genre for CrossGen. Grade: **B+**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B**

Harris: Here's another CrossGen hit: an entertaining, if stereotypical, '60s spy story with tight cinematic storytelling at a breakneck pace. Grade: **B-**.

Mateer: This book may be battling long odds: For one thing, nostalgic 1960s-style spy pastiches may have run their course (*Austin Powers* and its sequels having exhausted the genre). More importantly, the main characters here just aren't that attractive; one, the male super-spy, is an amoral jerk. That would be OK, if we could root for his partner, who's supposed to be a hotshot American who'll put him in his place, but in the first issue she just comes off as a ditz. Art and story are competent. Grade: **C**.

Shorr: CrossGen continues the process of reinventing itself with this series that, while not exactly groundbreaking, is a breath of fresh air for the current comic-book world. There is a noted dearth of comic books that even attempt to be humorous; this one succeeds well. Grade: **B+**.

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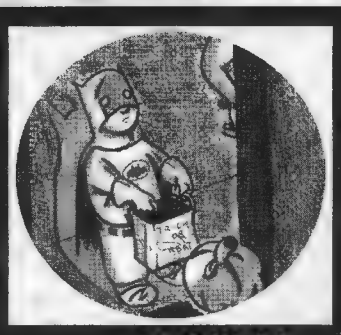

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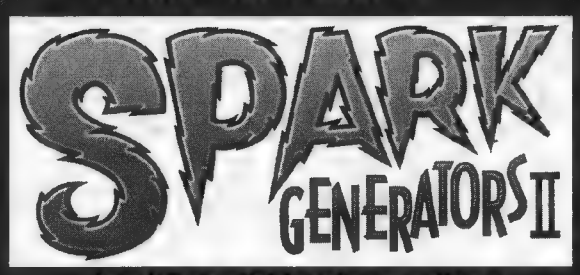

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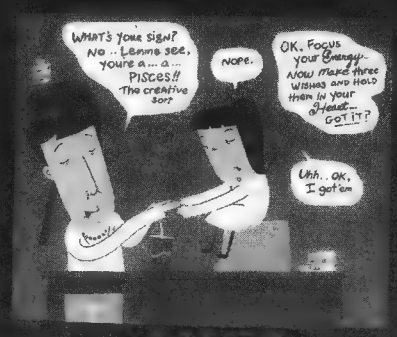
WHAT'S your sign? No .. Lemme see, you're a ... a ... PISCES! The creative sort
NOPE.
OK. Focus your Energy. Now make three wishes and hold them in your Head... GOT IT?
Uhh.. OK, I got'em

Leslie Stein
Yeah, It Is!
LAMS1406@aol.com

LOOKS LIKE YOURE FRESH OUT OF FRIENDS, FRED
I KNOW THAT VOICE!
JOHNSTON.
I TOLD LICKS YOU WOULDN'T GO FOR IT! YOU HAVEN'T GOT ANY IMAGINATION.
LICKS?! LICKS IS DEAD AND YOU KNOW IT!

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Lightning strikes, again

Short reviews clear Tony's desk quickly

Justice, like lightning, should ever appear, to some men, hope, and to other men, fear.
— Jefferson Franklin Pierce, adapted from a poem by Thomas Randolph

By **Tony Isabella**

Several readers complimented the "lightning round" portion of my ***CBG*** #1561 column. Since I enjoyed writing those quickie reviews, as well, I thought I'd do some late fall cleaning and devote this week's *Tips* to more of the same. If nothing else, it will clear space on my desk.

***100 Bullets* #47** (DC, $2.50) kicks off the "In Stinked" story arc by writer Brian Azzarello and artist Eduardo Risso. I couldn't say for sure — this is the first issue of the series I've read in years — but it appears Azzarello and Risso are still telling us tales of people given 100 untraceable bullets and a license to kill with them. This was a strong premise when the title launched and it's still a strong premise. On the minus side, the premise isn't sufficiently explained in this issue. Whom would it kill to give a new reader a leg-up in enjoying this comic book?

Azzarello's minimalist writing works well in establishing the characters, not nearly as well in establishing the "why" of their actions. Aided by colorist Patricia Mulvihill's sure storytelling skills, Risso's art is effective throughout the issue and rises to downright powerful on several occasions. The issue's last panel is particularly striking.

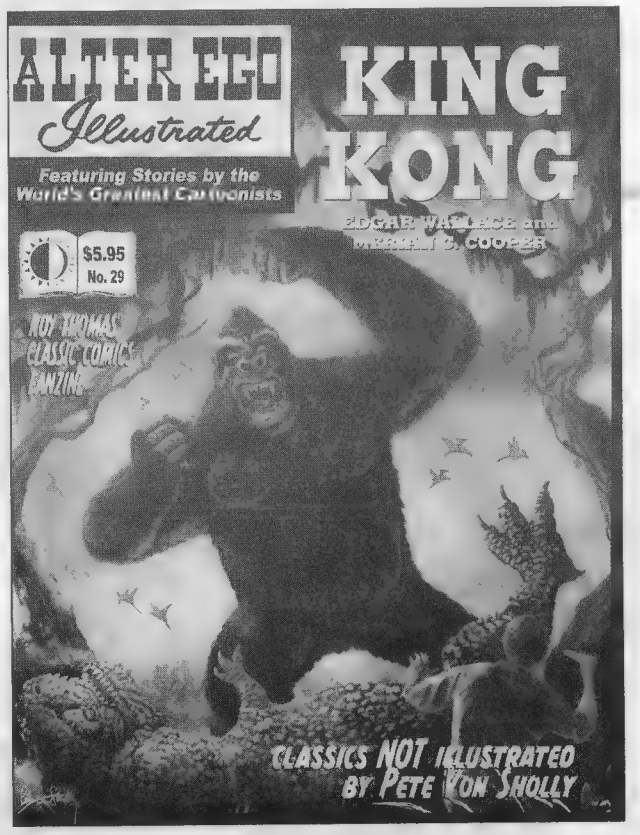
100 Bullets #47 gets four out of five Tonys.

***2000 AD* #1355-1360** (Rebellion, $3.75@) are barreling towards the weekly's "Autumn Offensive." Following the conclusion of John Wagner's and Charlie Adlard's multi-part "The Satanist," Judge Dredd starred in a trio of delightful one-off stories written by Gordon Rennie and drawn by Ian Gibson, Simon Frazier, and P.J. Holden. Prog #1359's "Meet the Flooks" is worthy of Eisner and Harvey Award consideration in the short-story category.

"Leviathan," the saga of a lost-in-time ship as big as a city, reached its conclusion in Prog #1360, and the ending was as shocking as the kick-off. Kudos to writer Ian Edginton and artist D'Israeli for this gem. I'll repeat my earlier recommendation that Rebellion collect this in an album sooner rather than later. The latest "Strontium Dog" story came to a satisfying close in these issues and a new "Sinister Dexter" tale began. "From Grace," a new post-apocalyptic series about the life and death of its winged protagonist, launched in Prog #1357. Despite decent writing and art by Simon Spurrier and Irving Frazier, this strip isn't working for me. I'm four chapters into the series and I still don't give a rodent's posterior about said protagonist or anyone else in the strip.

Overall, *2000 AD* #1355-1360 have more good than bad. That's why they get four Tonys.

***Alter Ego* #29** (TwoMorrows, $5.95) focuses on classic comics, *faux*-classics, non-existent classics, and a classic heroine who was reinvented more often than Madonna. Trina Robbins kicks things off with a career overview of Venus, who starred in her own 1950s comic book and who adapted to the marketplace of the moment. At various times in its history, *Venus* was a romance comic, a super-hero comic, a horror comic, and a science-fiction comic. Festooned with terrific illustrations from all the genres, the article makes me wish Marvel had *The Essential Venus* on its publishing schedule.



In addition:

Pete Von Sholly contributes striking renditions of *Classics Illustrated* adaptations that never were: H.P. Lovecraft, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and John W. Campbell Jr. Michael T. Gilbert writes of imaginary E.C. comics covers drawn in the early 1970s. Jim Amash talks with legendary writer George Gladir of *Archie, Sabrina,* and *Tales Calculated to Drive You Bats* fame. Thomas G. Lammers studies those so-called Marvel universe prototypes of the 1950s and 1960s.

Editor Roy Thomas interviews Frank Brunner, one of the most popular comics artists of the 1970s.

In other words, it's just another outstanding issue of *Alter Ego*. It earns five Tonys.

In a recent review of ***Archie's Mysteries*** ($2.19), I complained that criminal actions seldom had serious or any consequences in the title. Paul Castiglia, co-writer of the title with Barbara Jarvie, took note of my objection and sent me advance copies of #32 and #33. Looks like they were way ahead of me.

In #32, Riverdale High's Teen Scene Investigators are called on to investigate a cheating scandal. I was delighted to see such a topical real-life issue being addressed in an Archie title. What better forum for discussing the problem?

Castiglia and Jarvie wrote a terrific script which made good use of most of the cast's forensic specialities. Artists Fernando Ruiz and Rich Koslowski held up their end, as well.

In #33, the case is more personal. Hours after Chuck Clayton finishes a sports mural, his work is defaced by graffiti. I didn't think this issue's script was as solid as the previous one, but the issue was still entertaining, and the perpetrators, as in #32, had to face the consequences of their crimes. That's an important and, I think, necessary element of this series.

Archie's Mysteries #32 earns four-and-a-half Tonys. Issue #33 earns three Tonys. Of all the Archie titles, this one and *Jughead* are my favorites.

#32

#33

***B.A.B.E. Force: Back to School* #1** (Forceworks, $2.50) has cute and some funny things going for it. The Miguel Genlot cover shows a cheerful smiling cheerleader in mid-leap, a raygun in one hand and her pompons in the other. The premise is likewise amusing: a team of gorgeous secret agents, trained on a secluded island, who have no practical experience in the real world. Sadly, despite an earnest effort by writer and publisher Kurt Kushin, the comic book is never as good as the premise.

Don't mistake me. When the issue isn't bending over backward to remind the reader how sexy its heroines are, Kushin and Genlot create amusing moments. However, I think the cheesecake often disrupts

the pacing of the story and the timing of the gags. When I got to the end of this first chapter, I didn't feel connected to the ladies and wasn't particularly eager to see what happens next.

Given the potential of the series and creators — as illustrated by a chuckle-out-loud parody ad on the back cover — it's a shame this issue was so disappointing.

For effort and potential, *B.A.B.E. Force: Back to School* #1 gets two Tonys.

In the first volume of ***Boys over Flowers*** (Viz, $9.95), creator Yoko Kamio deftly combines delightful sappy schoolgirl romance with adolescent yet psychologically brutal bullying. Heroine Tsukushi Makino is accepted by a renowned academy and immediately runs afoul of her rich and powerful classmates — by defending another student from their abuse. For approximately 150 pages, we watch the plucky middle-class heroine deal with being the target of cruel pranks and rumors, fighting for her dignity, and questioning her attraction to a bad boy who might not be so bad after all. It's riveting stuff, so much so that I was seriously annoyed when, *sans* any explanation I could find, Makino's tale was interrupted for 50 pages of another unrelated and also continued story. Which means that Makino's tale will also get shortchanged in the next book.

Maybe disappointment influenced my mood, but those 50 pages of that second story seemed to drag on and on. It was a real struggle to read them and more of a struggle when, in the name of fairness, I read through them a second time.

Boys over Flowers Vol. 1 loses points for its lackluster back-up story. It gets an underachieving three Tonys.

I greet each new issue of *The Comics Journal* (Fantagraphics, $6.95) with dread and delight. The dread component comes from my expectation that, when some of the *Journal* critics and essayists get their academic mojo working, they can make my eyes water, whether it be with their dismissive attitudes or their excruciatingly detailed examination of this or that part of the elephant to the extent that they lose sight of the actual elephant. I don't deny that there is a place and maybe even a need for such writing, but it doesn't hold my interest. The delight kicks in, when I recall how much terrific stuff can be found in any given issue.

Take ***The Comics Journal* #154**. No, not my copy, you miserable *gonif*. That was just a figure of speech. Buy your own copy so you can enjoy the news section. *TCJ* may not cover all the comics news, but it does a splendid job covering select stories. (Frequently, it's the only magazine covering those stories in depth.) In the midst of the criticism, you will also find "Comics Made Me Fat" by Tom Spurgeon, a witty personal essay.

The news and Spurgeon are appetizers for this issue's main course: Gary Groth's 59-page interview with Will Elder, one of the funniest artists — perhaps *the* funniest artist — ever to work in comic books. Groth is at his best when exploring a subject he truly loves and in intelligently and unashamedly expressing the pleasure he derives from it. That's when he and *The Journal* shine.

The Comics Journal #254 earns five Tonys. The

YEAH— I REMEMBER *SLEEP!* BY THE ANCIENTS, I *HATE* PICKING UP *FARES* IN THE *DEAD END.*
AND YET *HERE SITS A DEAD END FARE IN YOUR BACK SEAT.*
NO OFFENSE, LADY. IT'S JUST *NOT SAFE!*
TOO MANY WEIRDOS!
THEN *WHY* ARE YOU *HERE?*
I *NEED* THE *MONEY!*
TONIGHT!
WHAT'S *DIFFERENT* ABOUT *TONIGHT?* ARE YOU IN SOME KIND OF *TROUBLE?*
YOU'RE A *COP*— I'VE SAID TOO *MUCH* ALREADY!

Frankenstein Mobster

good bits make it easy to overlook those not-as-good bits.

When I saw Mark Wheatley at Comic-Con International, I told him I thought *The Frankenstein Mobster* was such a brilliant title I could kick myself for not coming up with it. What I didn't get around to telling him was that, since I didn't come up with it, I was glad he did. So many other creators would've done the obvious with that title, but I knew Mark would come up with something that was both unexpected and exactly right.

***The Frankenstein Mobster* #0** (Image, $2.95) didn't disappoint me. This, dare I say, Eisneresque prelude to the ongoing story of the late Terry Todd and the hard-as-nails daughter who follows in his footsteps is more than a monsters-and-gangsters thriller. It's a relationship story. It's the story of an oppressed people, forced to dwell in the dark corners of humanity's world. *And* it's a terrific monsters-and-gangsters thriller.

It's a no-brainer recommending this issue. The only hard part is choosing between its two alternate covers. The first cover (by Wheatley) is a grim-and-moody portrait of the title character. The second (by Adam Hughes) is a whimsical "movie poster" featuring the lovely Terri Todd. As much as I dislike the concept of alternate covers, I had to have both of these.

The Frankenstein Mobster #0 earns five Tonys. I'm expecting great things from this series.

Hiroshi Aro's ***Futaba-Kun Change: Unidentified Foreign Origin*** (I.C. Entertainment, $11.95) is the eighth and final volume in the artist's series about Futaba Shimeru, a gender-bending teen-ager, his equally changeable family, and Misaki Shima, the human girl who loves him. The similarities between *Change* and Rumiko Takihashi's classic *Ranma½* are glaringly obvious, but *Change* is more sexually playful than its inspiration.

As the series progressed, Aro always seemed to be trying to match Takihashi beat for beat. He might not have been blindingly original in his stories, but he told them with great energy and an infectious joy. Up until this last book, I was following *Futaba-Kun Change* in its pamphlet form and looked forward to reading each new issue. I switched gears because I wanted to read the finale in one sitting.

Cue the ***Spoiler Warning:*** Aro took his biggest detour from the Takahashi path with the conclusion of his story. He reveals the secret and alien origins of Futaba's people, then sends the teen rocketing to his home world with Misaki and Kurin Shimeru, head of Futaba's clan and his would-be fianceé. What they learn on the voyage is anti-climactic and, worse, keeps readers from seeing the truly interesting developments that occur on Earth in their absence. I was hoping for a far more satisfying finale.

Unrealized possibilities keep *Futaba-Kun Change: Unidentified Foreign Origins* from receiving more than three Tonys. But I'd buy a sequel in a heartbeat.

More lightning-round reviews next week.

***Tony's Tips** is © 2003 Tony Isabella. Comments on this column or review items for future columns should be sent to Tony at: Tony's Tips, P.O. Box 1502, Medina, OH 44258. You can also e-mail Tony at: **tonyisa@ohio.net**.*

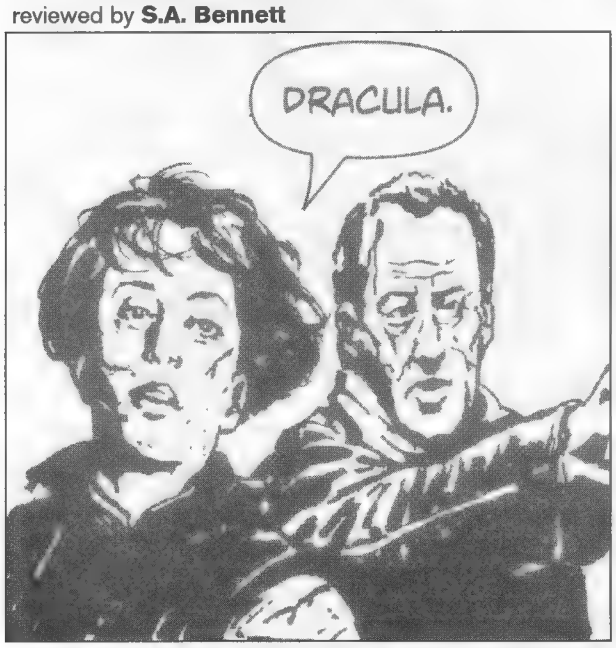
READING ROOM

Questions? Comments? Criticisms? Subpoenas?

Correspondence to CBG, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990
or ohso@krause.com

Sword of Dracula #1 — Image

$2.95, b/w, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Jason Henderson; Artist: Greg Scott
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**



If you were wondering if there could possibly be a new variation on vampire fighting that we haven't seen before, well, how about *Our Army at War with Dracula*? The relentless military unit pursuing Vlad Tepes in a present-day France has cute anti-vampire weapons, which is good, since writer Jason Henderson has given Dracula a new ability: complete control of blood, as in forming it into the titular sword (which, frankly, seems like the power of a bad *Savage Dragon* villain).

It's drawn in a smudgy, deep-black art style that makes the proceedings look like something you'd find in *2000 AD*, and that's a compliment. This one creeps up on you, though it fails to answer the obvious question: If Dracula is so insanely powerful and survived for so long, why not just drop a nuclear bomb on the bloodsucker?

Sword of Dracula #1

PRO	CON
Drac's back.	Shape of a blood sword.

GRADE: B

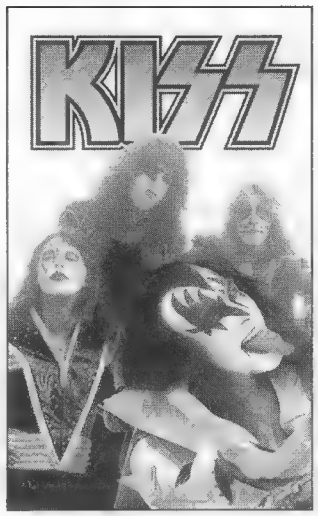
www.imagecomics.com

Kiss Vol. 3: Men and Monsters — Dark Horse

$12.95, color, 96 pgs., available now
Writer: Scott Lobdell; Artist: Mel Rubi
reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

The '70s super-band *cum* super-heroes continues its quixotic quest to contribute to the weirdness in the universe. Lurking in back alleys and bargain bins from New York City to New Orleans, this larger-than-life quartet want to rock and roll all night with the bad guys.

Aiding The Demon, Star Child, Beast King, and Celestial is the new do-gooder Mr. Speed. Meanwhile, the guys sporting kabuki masks undergo a collective identity crisis, as they struggle to retain their humanity while facing a monstrous foe and the brutes within themselves. Lastly, they confront Christine 16, a creation from an international business syndicate that now wants her terminated. Can she face the music with the help of these masters of disaster?



Starting fresh with a new publisher and a new adventure, *Kiss* is still all about the same old thing: a bunch of guys dressing up and indulging in flights of fantasy. Despite the efforts of Lobdell, this tale is best reserved for diehard fans who prefer a brand of entertainment that others may simply find ho hum.

Kiss Vol. 3

PRO	CON
Putting on a good show.	Are they better musicians than heroes?

GRADE: C-

www.darkhorse.com

PICK OF THE WEEK

Fagin the Jew

Doubleday

$15.95, sepia tones, 128 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Will Eisner

Will Eisner has done it again. With a body of work six decades strong, this master of comics literature continues to conquer new territory.

Fagin the Jew is not an adaptation of *Oliver Twist*, although that famous orphan's tale intertwines with Fagin's for the latter half of the book. The story is uniquely Fagin's: who he is and how he came to be.

In *Fagin*, Eisner decries ethnic stereotyping. Fagin may be a scoundrel, but that is no more because he is a Jew than Sikes is a ruffian or Nancy is a prostitute because they are Christians. Dickens does a great disservice, Eisner posits, by his frequent references to Fagin as "the Jew."

Is Eisner hypocritical for taking umbrage at Dickens' work when he himself created the stereotypical "Ebony White" in *The Spirit*? Eisner addresses this point in his introduction.

Eisner's Fagin does not resemble the usual hook-nosed caricature. He is a more real character and possesses depth he lacks in *Oliver Twist*. A rogue by circumstance, had life treated him more fairly, he might have been something better. It's not an apology for Fagin's behavior; it's an explanation.

Eisner doesn't make Fagin a hero; he makes him a person. In that, he treats him more fairly than Dickens ever did.

Fagin the Jew

PRO	CON
New heights from a master.	Prejudice.

GRADE: A+

reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**
www.doubleday.com

Nightwing #86 — DC

$2.25, color, 40 pgs., available now
Writer: Devin Grayson; Artist: Patrick Zircher
reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

Though advertised as "a great jumping-on point for new readers" by DC's official website, *Nightwing* #86 doesn't mention that Dick "Nightwing" Grayson used to be Robin or that Barbara "Oracle" Gordon used to be Batgirl. This is common knowledge to super-hero fans, of course, but depending on the newness of the new readers in question, these omissions could present a problem, especially since the meat of the issue hinges on how Barbara's current relationship with Dick is at odds with their adventurous past. The portrayal of Nightwing as a motorcycle-riding, thug-busting daredevil is, indeed, in interesting contrast to the wheelchair-bound limitations of Oracle, especially for readers familiar with Alan Moore's *The Killing Joke* (in which The Joker paralyzes Barbara Gordon).

There's no doubting the new reader-friendliness of the art, which is at once realistic and exciting. The three main players (Barbara, Dick, and Alfred) would be easily recognizable out of context, and the sensation of speeding, soaring motorcycles is excellent, especially considering the static nature (relative to film and television) of the medium.

Nightwing #86

PRO	CON
Nightwing on wheels.	Barbara on wheels.

GRADE: B

www.dccomics.com

Captain America: Ice TPB — Marvel

$12.99, color, 120 pgs., available now
Writers: Chuck Austen, John Ney Reiber
Artist: Jae Lee
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

Reprinting *Captain America* (current series) #12-16, *Ice* asks the following ques-

tions: Did the United States government know that Captain America was frozen and leave him there? Did it actively place him there to get him out of the way?

For such a provocative question, there is plenty of build-up but surprisingly little payoff. In fact, at the climax of his quest, Cap seems to get sidetracked by the villain *du jour* and forgets all about tracking down the truth.

It is a thought-provoking premise (even if it is lifted from the "Heroes Reborn" version of *Captain America*), and Cap is rightly agitated by it. Readers might expect things to return to status quo by the story's end by revealing it to be a hoax, but the manner in which it is ultimately dismissed is most unsatisfactory.

Despite a "Previously ..." page, there are characters and situations that are not adequately introduced. The opening chapter also skips around in time and space in a confusing fashion.

It's a dark story with appropriately dark art, but the high quality of the paper and the skill of colorist José Villarrubia keep it from getting muddy.

www.marvel.com

Captain America: Ice

PRO	CON
Great premise.	Unsatisfying conclusion.

GRADE: C+

Azumanga Daioh Vol. 1 — ADV Manga

$9.99, b/w, 172 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Kiyohiko Azuma
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**

While every other publisher is busily worshipping at the alter of the "manga-size" paperback, AD Vision bucks the trend with this larger than usual volume It's also a departure when it comes to subject matter and story-telling, since it tells the story of a year in the life of a high-school class through a series of four-panel "comic strips."

Thanks to differences in Japanese and American humor, sometimes the individual "strips" don't seem to have a "joke," as we know them, but when the collection is taken as a whole, we get a feel for the characters and teachers and feel for them. Especially Sakaki, the tall, stoic but secretly shy girl whose love of animals is in no way reciprocated — or her English teacher Miss Yukari, who runs in terror at the first sign of a (brrr) "foreigner." It's a lot of fun, except for Mr. Kimura; I know the Japanese just love their "comic perverts," but you'll forgive me if I don't find the idea of a teacher pursuing his students that funny.

Azumanga Daioh Vol. 1

PRO	CON
Sakaki.	Mr. Kirmura.

GRADE: A

www.adv-manga.com

Shaman King — Viz

$7.95, b/w, 208 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Hiroyuki Takei
reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

Another spin-off from the periodic anthology *Shonen Jump*, this series aims squarely at the youth audience interested in stories that cross over anime, videogames, and trading cards. Following in the footsteps of *Pokémon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* comes the high-school student Yoh, who knows that his true calling is to commune with the spirits who inhabit the afterlife.

Manta, his new buddy at cram class, is on one hand wigged out about Yoh's creepy hobby, but on the other fascinated by the fantastic events he observes. Taking on gang members disrespectful of the dead and tackling an unsettled ghost are impressive feats, to be sure. But can Yoh and his soulful samurai companion Amidamaru emerge victorious over other young shamans eager to do battle?

Part slapstick and part primer (*e.g.*, What is the textbook definition of a shaman? Well, I'm glad you asked ...), *Shaman King* introduces the requisite elements for merchandising domination: kids who invoke supernatural personas in combat to increase their status. Finding his own adolescent twist on the fighting formula, Takei has found success reaching fans in Japan, and it's a good bet that he'll do the same here.

Shaman King

PRO	CON
Invoking fighting phantoms.	Clone of commercial commotions.

GRADE: B+

www.viz.com

SERIES SPOTLIGHT

THE SECOND WE HAVE THE ALL CLEAR TO GO OUT THERE --
-- I WANT EVERY AVAILABLE MAN OUT THERE LOOKING FOR BANNER.
THIS COUNTRY IS NOT GOING TO LOSE AN ASSET --
DADDY?

Hulk: Gray #1-2 — Marvel

$3.50@, color, 40 pgs.@, available now
Writer: Jeph Loeb; Artist: Tim Sale

In the fine tradition of *Daredevil: Yellow* and *Spider-Man: Blue*, *Hulk: Gray* retells tales of a classic hero's earlier days.

The story begins with Bruce Banner confiding in Doc Samson about his one true love, Betty Ross, and the heartache he feels when he thinks of her. The resultant flashback sequences tread familiar ground for longtime fans of The Gray Goliath (who mysteriously became green in the second issue of the original *Hulk* series), but the gamma-bomb explosion that turned Banner into Hulk is far more harrowing than ever before. In the original version by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby (*Hulk* #1, 1962), this quintessential scene took up just three small panels, but here it spans across two full pages, giving Sale ample room to show the fear, the pain, and the helplessness Banner must have felt. Sale pays respectful homage to King Kirby, but his work is darker and more menacing.

Other strong points of this stylishly retold origin include an especially demanding General Ross (he insists that his daughter *act* like a "general's daughter"), a suitably thick and chunky, though anatomically proportionate, Hulk, and a Bruce Banner who pities himself, not for who he becomes — but who he *is*.

Loeb and Sale's track record remains untarnished. As with previous projects by the dynamic duo, *Hulk: Gray* selects a familiar character, takes him back to his roots, and makes the whole shebang seem fresh and exciting (and, in this case, smashing) all over again.

Hulk: Gray #1-2

PRO	CON
Hulk looks incredible.	A little pricey.

GRADE: A

Brett Weiss

www.marvel.com

READING ROOM REPORT CARD

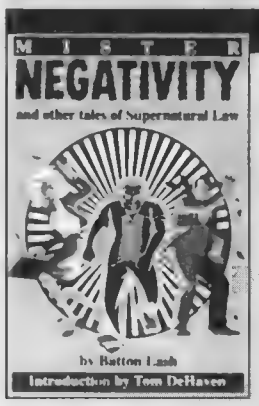
From CBG #1566 and #1567

Amazing Spider-Man #500	B
Avengers #71	B+
Batman: City of Light #1	D
Courageous Princess	A
Crazy Hip Groovy Monsters	B-
500 Comic Book Action Heroes	D
Flowers & Bees	B
Full Metal Panic	B
Genesis: Art of Transformers	C+
H-E-R-O #9	A-
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	A-
Madburger	D+
More Fund Comics	A
The Onion Ad Nauseam Vol. 14	A
Persepolis	A
Planetes	A
Pubo TPB	B-
Smax #1-3	A-
Stupid Comics #2	A
Sunn	C
Superman/Batman Secret Files	B+
Thor #68-70	B+
Trigun Vol. 1	A-
Walking Dead #1	B
Wonder Woman Ultimate Guide	A-
Yankee Girl #1	C+

COMICS GUIDE

By Maggie Thompson

Mister Negativity — Exhibit A



Batton Lash, black & white, 170 pgs., ISBN 0-9633954-8-3, $15.95, available now.

Subtitled "And Other Tales of Supernatural Law," this paperback collection includes eight stories from Lash's *Supernatural Law* title and one from his *Mavis* series. Most tales focus on the long-running characters of Alanna Wolf and Jeff Byrd, lawyers who specialize in clients tangled in supernatural matters. The characters originated in a strip which began in 1979 (and eventually had a run in ***CBG***, as well) and have starred in their own comic book for almost a decade. But no knowledge of earlier material is required to enjoy this volume. Lash's art and writing skills combine beautifully with the premise: "Beware the creatures of the night — they have *lawyers*!" Lash's canny handling of Done in One tales and his knowledge of several fields make for strong, entertaining stories. And there are even delightful parodies, including a certain comics aardvark (right) and a gorilla-featuring Carmine Infantino riff. Even Tom DeHaven's introduction is memorable. These are great for both knowledgeable comics buffs and those new to the field. Why *isn't* there a TV series?

HUBERIS WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHEN WE COULD WORK TOGETHER TO MAP OUT A STRATEGY
WELL, MS WOLFF AND I ALWAYS WELCOME OUR CLIENTS' INVOLVEMENT--

www.exhibitapress.com

Steve Canyon 1947 and 1948 — Checker

Milton Caniff, black and white, 1947 ISBN 0-9710249-9-5, 148 pgs, $14.95; 1948 ISBN 0-9741664-1-3, 168 pgs., $18.95, available now.

It comes as a surprise in these times — in which DC is so generous in keeping so many of its classics in print — that other, formerly reprinted, material is no longer widely available. Why would a publisher today reprint *Steve Canyon* strips a year at a time? Hasn't it *already* been done? Well, yes — but those volumes are long unavailable: a fact that's shocking, considering the merits Caniff displayed and his powerful influence on other comics storytellers. His mix of adventure, mystery, strong characters, witty script, dynamic art, and compelling action never failed in these early days of his story of a bomber pilot returning to civilian life as head of a charter airline. 1947 is a must-buy; readers who aren't drawn into these exciting stories about Copper Calhoun, Happy Easter, and Madame Lynx won't care about the episodes yet to come. But fans of the best of comic strips will want to grab each volume as it's released. Good repro, good paper, terrific stories available again in convenient form for less than $20. Thanks, Checker!

BUT OUR FAMILIES AND LIVESTOCK MOVE DOWN THE SAFE COASTAL ROAD, WHILE WE FORM A SCREEN BETWEEN THEM AND OUR ENEMIES...
THEN YOU DO REALIZE THAT THE BUFFER BOYS WANT TO BAIT YOU INTO LEAVING YOUR SUPPLY COLUMN VULNERABLE!
I WOULD NOT TAKE MY TROOPS — I SHALL GO ALONE!

www.checkerbpg.com

Bone #53 — Cartoon Books

Jeff Smith, black and white, 32 pgs., $2.95, available Nov. 19.

While it may seem unnecessary to review yet another issue of this award-winning fantasy epic, Smith remains at the top of his form, as *Bone* winds toward its conclusion in #55. Excitement and fresh developments in each new installment make this a "must" every time. The sole problem is that these closing installments are the *last* point at which readers should jump on. Those who haven't followed the story since its start in 1991 shouldn't figure they can catch up with #53 — but catch up they should do as soon as possible. Everything, from the clear lettering to the well-spotted blacks and carefully rendered, albeit often cartoony, figures, shows a meticulous, gifted craftsman at work. ***CBG*** has recommended *Bone* from its inception in 1991, and #53 includes such revelations as life in the ghost circles (above) and a possible change in Phoney Bone. Solicited for shipping in *April* at 24 pages, this is, instead, 32 pages long — and Smith is keeping the price point stable. Wow. Two to go.

www.boneville.com

Peanuts: The Art of Charles Schulz SC — Pantheon

$16.95, color and b/w, 368 pgs., available now
Writer/Editor: Chip Kidd; Artist: Charles Schulz
reviewed by **Brent Frankenhoff**

For those fans who missed the hardcover edition earlier this year, this softcover is a welcome and affordable treat, especially with 32 pages of new material, mostly photos of items from the new archives at the Charles M. Schulz Museum. It's also a great appetizer for Fantagraphics' upcoming *Complete Peanuts*, scheduled to begin in April 2004.

In addition to commentary drawn from Schulz' own letters and interviews, the book has pictures of an assortment of licensed items and reproductions of dozens of early strips (some so small you'll need a magnifying glass to read them).

Not exactly a scholarly tome (that will come with the Fantagraphics project), the book does a good job of tracing the strip's history and relevance with strips chosen to accent the topic at hand. One of the most poignant photos in the book is a picture of Schulz' drawing table as he left it after completing the final strip.

This is an excellent tribute to the work of a comics genius and belongs in every fan's collection.

www.randomhouse.com
ISBN: 0-375-71463-4

Peanuts: Art of Schulz

PRO	CON
An excellent and poignant tribute.	Waiting for *Complete Peanuts*.

GRADE: A-

Hawkeye #1 — Marvel

$2.99, color, 40 pgs., available now
Writer: Fabian Nicieza; Artist: Stefano Raffaele
reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

With the release of *Hawkeye* #1, Marvel continues its trend of producing super-hero comic books without the pesky nuisance of actual super-heroes. Hawkeye, who once wore a purple costume and used trick arrows, is now simply known by his civilian identity, Clint Barton. His dark wardrobe is sensible and practical, he shoots plain old arrows (or at least will in the second issue), and he's a hardened street tough (with a heart of gold) who likes hot chili and cold beer. His personality is roughly

the same (he's still an ex-carney with a rebellious streak), but the lack of super-hero trappings will probably alienate (or at least lessen the enjoyment of) readers with a fond recollection of Hawkeye's stint as an Avenger.

Interestingly, the former Spandex-wearer appears to have picked up almost Bullseye-esque skills in employing common objects as weapons. The scene in which he uses a hairband and a spoon in bow-and-arrow-like fashion to shoot a bottle isn't drawn particularly well, but it is a cool idea.

Overall, the realistic, sketchy art fits the gritty nature of the story, which is a fairly clever take on the stranger-rescues-girl-from-bad-man scenario.

Hawkeye #1

PRO	CON
Hawkeye!	No Hawkeye?

GRADE: B

www.marvel.com

Capes #1 — Image

$3.50, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Robert Kirkman; Artist: Mark Englert
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**

In case anyone else is contemplating doing a super-hero-meets-reality-TV-comic, stop right now; by the time it sees print, the fad will be over. But that doesn't stop *Capes*, a *Cops* "it's not an adventure, it's just a job" styled adventure, from being loads of juvenile fun.

It fits nicely into the Erik Larsen universe, and it's not just the art that has his fingerprints all over it. As in *Savage Dragon*, we keep bumping into interesting characters that we're never introduced to (though I'd say "Machine Head" looks more like an "Atomic Tiki"), has the same level of political incorrectness (one hero says something so unbelievably sexist, a black hero doesn't seem to notice it's also supremely racist), and there's more than a couple of truly original moments, like the "all popular black heroes have electricity-based names" rap or when a hero is finally caught staring at the heroic proportions of a super-heroine.

Capes #1

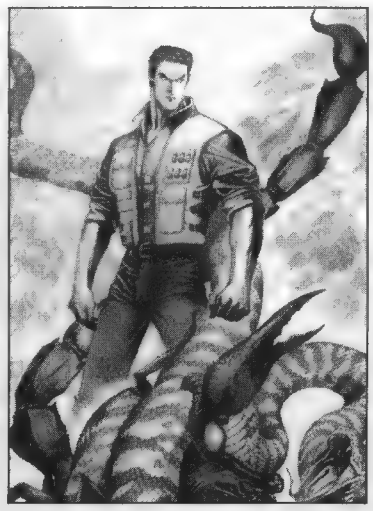
PRO	CON
Machine Head.	Knockout's poor back.

GRADE: B

www.imagecomics.com

Black Leopard Vol. 1 — ComicsOne

$14.95, b/w, 160 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Wing Shing Ma
reviewed by **Oliver Chin**



In the tradition of spy-hunter stories, Black Leopard is the latest sword-wielding super-secret agent. Following a convoluted backstory, he reclaims his trusty blade Sabertooth from the care of two feng-shui masters, to prepare for his bout with Edge Sanbu, the heir to a Japanese mafia family.

However, Black Leopard must battle the aptly named Fat King, a renegade general who seeks revenge on those who betrayed him. Then why is Edge's wife helping Leopard save his teammate Lily who's been imprisoned by the Sanbu clan? Finally, these two foes square off and the sparks fly. Meanwhile, Edge's father guarantees victory at all costs, even if it means partnering with the detested Black Sun and reconciling with his prodigal son Martial.

Penned by Hong Kong's Wing Shing Ma (creator of The Storm Riders), this is one non-stop series of bone-crunching and blood-splattering explosions with plot and character motivation as an afterthought. Speed lines and sound effects abound, but they only add to the headache readers will get from wondering what the heck is going on.

Black Leopard Vol. 1

PRO	CON
Violence illustrated to the hilt.	Sound and fury, signifying confusion.

GRADE: B-

www.comicsone.com

Batman #620 — DC

$2.25, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Brian Azzarello; Artist: Eduardo Risso
reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

Batman #620 is a radical departure from the much-ballyhooed "Hush" storyline, which wrapped up in the previous issue. Lee and Loeb's marvelously entertaining take on the character and his environment was mainstream super-heroics personified. Part One of the *noir*ish, horror-tinted "Broken City," on the other hand, has much more in common with *Batman: Year One*, *The Killing Joke*, and *The Dark Knight Returns*.

The writing style is grimly pessimistic and darkly humorous, and the stylish, shadowy, impressionistic art owes much to David Mazzucchelli and Frank Miller.

The issue begins with Batman ruminating on the sheer brokenness (hence the title) of his not-so-fair city, going so far as to suggest that the rain falling on Gotham is not the tears of God, but, rather, a certain other spattering fluid. This sets the tone for a disturbingly moody story that will have readers questioning the relevance of The Comics Code Authority. This Code-approved comic book features an attempted rape (which goes as far as the man wielding a knife and unzipping his pants), a sexually charged, insanely gorgeous woman clad in a seductive negligee, and a brutally violent, highly disturbed anti-hero whom kids generally admire.

Essentially, this is an exceptional piece of writing and art, but it's definitely geared toward adults (and possibly older, more mature teens) who like their comics grim and gritty.

Batman #620

PRO	CON
100 Bullets creative team.	Should be a separate mini-series.

GRADE: A-

Why DC didn't publish it as a separate mini-series is anyone's guess, but it certainly doesn't belong on the same shelf as *Avengers*/*JLA* and other mainline titles.

www.dccomics.com

Gyo — Viz

$12.95, b/w, 200 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Junji Ito
reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

The creator of *Uzumaki* has made a name for himself by being one sick puppy. With a penchant for making animals the harbingers of doom, he returns to show how the ocean can have its revenge.

On the island of Okinawa, Tadashi and Kaori find splitting up hard to do — especially when an awful stench stops her in her tracks and she is chased by a zombie fish with spiderlike legs. How did this thing evolve? Seeking to help, Dr. Koyanagi realizes that this may be just the beginning of a never-ending nightmare and the twisted result of vindictive human ingenuity.

The odor foreshadows something far worse, since now legions of creatures, from sharks to squid, arise from the sea and overwhelm the civilian population. With a detailed eye for strange transformations, *Gyo* makes the impossible plausible. Though some scenes make little sense, fans of freaky fantasy will want to know what happens next to the poor teen Tadashi.

Gyo

PRO	CON
Gripping grotesque horror.	Flying filet of fish.

GRADE: B+

www.viz.com

THE REVIEW CREW

Brent Frankenhoff

Managing editor of ***Comics Buyer's Guide***, Brent manages this rotating circle of ***CBG*** Review Crew writers. In between, he finds time for reviews.
Review copies to 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990

Jack Abramowitz

Jack is the administrator of a national youth movement. He's been collecting comics for 30 years and writing about them for 10.
Review copies to P.O. Box 1147, New York, NY 10274-1147

Oliver Chin

Oliver Chin is a freelance media consultant, a freelance writer for *Comics & Games Retailer*, and the author of *9 of 1: A Window to the World*.
Review copies to 535 Rockdale, San Francisco, CA 94127

Brett Weiss

A former owner of Fantastic Comics & Cards, Brett has collected comics for almost three decades. He is now a full-time freelancer, writing reviews.
Review copies to 6537 Moonglow Ln., Watauga, TX 76148.

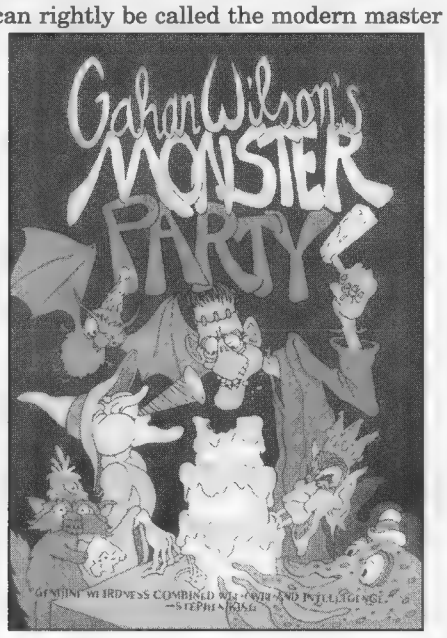
S.A. Bennett

S.A. is also a member of the Retailer Review panel for ***CBG***'s *Comics in Your Future*.
Review copies to Dark Star Comics, 237 Xenia Ave., Yellow Springs, OH 45387.

Gahan Wilson's Monster Party — iBooks

$9.95, b/w, 186 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Gahan Wilson
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**

When it comes to effective storytelling, you just can't beat the economy of the single panel cartoon. When done right, it can convey volumes, and Gahan Wilson can rightly be called the modern master of the form.



There's plenty of evidence to back up that claim in this handy paperback that features appearances by everyone from Sherlock Holmes to the Frankenstein Monster in cartoons that range from the deceptively simple line drawing to the most lushly shaded and detailed.

Of course, Wilson's specialty is the gruesome, and he could teach today's crowd of pseudo-Goth-punk artists a thing or two about depicting the macabre without falling into the trap of depending on the gross-out for cheap laughs. Seeing so much of his work at once makes the reader wonder: Now that Fantagraphics will be collecting the *Complete Peanuts*, where's Wilson's definitive collection?

Monster Party

PRO	CON
Disturbing and amusing.	But not enough.

GRADE: A

www.ibooks.net

Popcorn Romance — CPM Manga

$9.99, b/w, 192 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Tomoko Taniguchi
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**

From the heavily airbrushed cover featuring a pigtailed teen-aged girl communing with a nature full of cuddly animal friends, *Popcorn Romance* announces that it's super-super-girly.

With its respect for the elderly and the environment and "Youth Wants to Rock" plot, at least the main feature has more on its immediate mind than the relentless pursuit of chaste romance, but the back-up, "The Magic of Love," lives up to every romance genre stereotype.

A faint-hearted schoolgirl receives an illusionary sense of self-esteem when she's finally squired by the hunky heartthrob of her dreams.

And, if you ever wondered if they were still making the old-fashioned style of manga in which a girl's eye is made to look like a gigantic, sopping wet Queen Ann Lace doily, here it is again.

But all that said, it is desperately wholesome, and I'd much rather have my underage nieces read this than watch The WB's *The O.C.*

Popcorn Romance

PRO	CON
Kindness to animals.	Those eyes, staring at me ...

GRADE: C

www.centralparkmedia.com

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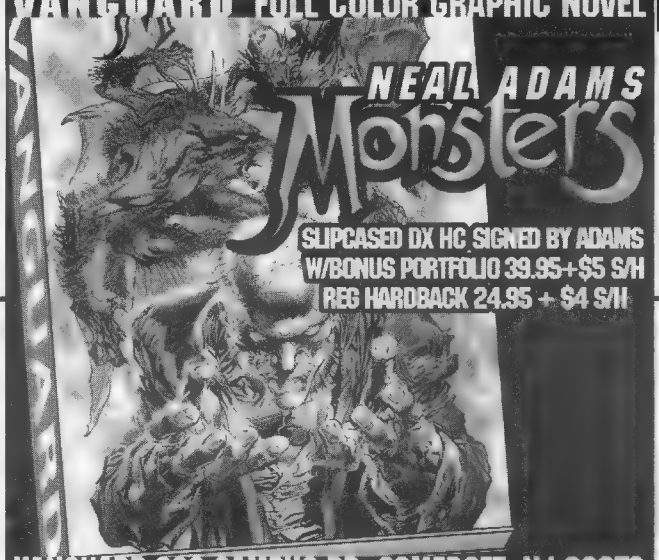

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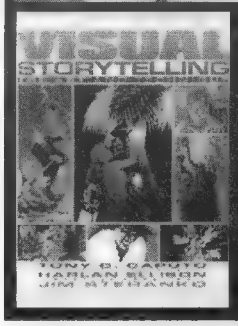

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BACK ISSUES

CBG's weekly nostalgia celebration!

*"At **CBG**, we recognize that the classic comics of yesteryear are why most of us got into comics in the first place. It's our mission to celebrate those comics by reminding you of great characters and stories, presenting insights into what creators had in mind, and searching out affordable reprints!"*

Visions of EYKIWs!

More readers chime in on Marvel's Avenging Android's origins (and revamped origin and re-revamped origin ...)

Dear Captain, Page 34

The creators, characters, and series people are STILL talking about today!

FLASHBACK

10 years ago

Zack Mosley, whose aviation-adventure comic strip *Smilin' Jack* soared on newspaper pages for 40 years, died Dec. 21, 1993, at the age of 87.

15 years ago

Another Rainbow/Gladstone Publisher **Bruce Hamilton** announced publication of *Mickey Mouse in Color*, available in both a $250 and a $39.95 edition. The book reprinted classic *Mickey Mouse* strips by **Floyd Gottfredson**.

20 years ago

Awwww, Jason Todd. Remember him? (Well, if you've been reading current comics, you probably do.) Anyway, he first appeared in the Robin costume in DC's *Batman* #366 (Dec 83).

30 years ago

A six-panel appearance in a Man-Thing story written by **Steve Gerber** and illustrated by **Val Mayerik** and **Sal Trapani** introduced Howard the Duck to a world he never made in Marvel's *Fear* #19 (Dec 73).

35 years ago

Writer-artist **J. Scott Pike** introduced Dolphin in DC's *Showcase* #79 (Dec 68).

40 years ago

The Hate Monger first mongered hate in Marvel's *Fantastic Four* #21 (Dec 63) by **Stan Lee** and **Jack Kirby**.

50 years ago

Writer **J. Marc DeMatteis** was born Dec. 15, 1953.

CBG ONLINE!

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Mickey Mouse's first 75 years

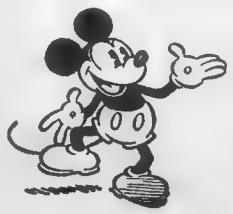
The black-and-white character remains a colorful icon

By **John Lavernoich**

Mickey Mouse is more than animation's first super-star — he helped change the face of the industry. Without Mickey and his creator, Walt Disney, Donald Duck and Goofy — and Bugs Bunny, Popeye, Tom and Jerry, and the Simpsons — would have never come into being.

Early Disney days. Disney had been in the fledging animation industry since 1923. That was when he produced and directed a series of combination live-action and animated shorts starring various child actresses as Alice, a live-action girl who mingled with animated characters. He created a series of cartoons starring Oswald the Rabbit (whose early design foreshadowed that of Mickey Mouse), which was owned by film distributor Charles Mintz. When Mintz offered Disney a new contract at a lower price, Disney refused. Legend has it that Disney created Mickey Mouse on his train trip from New York back to Los Angeles. The story was that Disney was inspired by his childhood in Kansas City, in which he'd had a family of mice for pets. He originally called his new star "Mortimer," but his wife, Lillian, suggested a name change, so Disney changed it to "Mickey." In reality, Mickey was designed not long after Disney returned to Los Angeles, where he and animator Ub Iwerks cooperated to shape the character in terms of personality and physical appearance.

The first. Mickey's first appearance was in the silent animated short "Plane Crazy" (1927). He takes up flying (inspired by Charles Lindbergh's historic solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean from New York to Paris that same year); the cartoon also marked the first appearance of Mickey's long-time girlfriend, Minnie. Positive reaction at a special screening inspired Disney to create the second Mickey silent , "Gallopin' Gaucho" (1927), a parody of a Douglas Fairbanks film, which marked the debut of the villainous Peg-Leg Pete. However, Disney's East Coast distributors were unimpressed and decided not to show them.



Mickey Mouse is TM and ® The Walt Disney Company

That might have been the end of the mouse's career, except that a turning point occurred, when audiences heard Al Jolson sing in *The Jazz Singer* (1927). The advent of sound in films inspired Disney to make another Mickey Mouse cartoon — one that would change animation forever.

Pioneering. "Steamboat Willie" (1928), the third Mickey Mouse cartoon, was also the first sound cartoon with a synchronized sound track. It told of Mickey's riverboat adventures. Disney had so much faith in "Steamboat Willie" that his studio invested every penny in its production. That faith was justified, when "Steamboat Willie" was first shown at New York City's Colony Theater on Nov. 18, 1928 (later to be established as Mickey's official birthday) and became a success. Sound was added to "Plane Crazy" and "Gallopin' Gaucho" immediately — these cartoons, plus "The Barn Dance" (1929), helped reinforce Mickey's popularity. Musical scores were provided by Carl Stalling, who would later work for Warner Bros.

Mickey first spoke in "The Karnival Kid" (1930) — Disney provided Mickey's voice until 1946, when sound effects supervisor James MacDonald succeeded him. Mickey's early cartoons portrayed him as a fun-loving mischief-maker — but, by the mid-1930s, his character was softened.

The character's first Academy Award-nominated short was "Mickey's Orphans" (1931), in which Mickey and Minnie play host to homeless kittens at Christmas. Tthis was the same year that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences introduced its Animated Short Subject category. Two other Mickey cartoons nominated for Oscars during the 1930s were "Building a Building" (1933) and "The Brave Little Tailor" (1938). All three lost to other animated shorts — all of them produced by Disney. It wouldn't be until 1941 that a Mickey Mouse cartoon would finally win an Oscar — but, during the 1930s, it wasn't a complete loss, when Disney was given a special Oscar for creating Mickey.

As the 1930s progressed, Mickey's cast of characters grew, as he and Minnie were joined by Pluto, Goofy, Clarabelle Cow, Horace Horseshoe, and Clara Cluck — a sign of growing popularity. That popularity also resulted in a newspaper comic strip that ran on and off several times during most of the 20th century (the first incarnation ran from 1930 to 1989) and regular appearances in a variety of comic books published by various publishers for most of his career. There was even a short-lived 1937 radio show broadcast on NBC. Mickey has also lent his image to merchandise items from toys to coloring books, as well as being a spokesmouse for Nabisco, Kellogg's, Minute Maid, *etc.* during most of his animation career in print, radio, and TV ads.

Changes and an award. "The Band Concert" (1935), Mickey's first color cartoon, was a major turning point. It focused on his band performing "The William Tell Overture," despite being interrupted by not only Donald Duck but also a raging tornado. Thanks to color, Mickey became even more popular, as evident in such cartoons as "Thru the Mirror" (1936), in which Mickey enters an alternate universe via a mirror. Also popular were cartoons in which Mickey teamed with Donald and Goofy, including "Lonesome Ghosts" (1937) and "Mickey's Trailer" (1938).

By the end of the 1930s, Mickey's facial design had changed, when animator Fred Moore added pupils to his eyes as well as a jowl, allowing the character to express his emotions even more. The best example of the "new look" Mickey occurred in "The

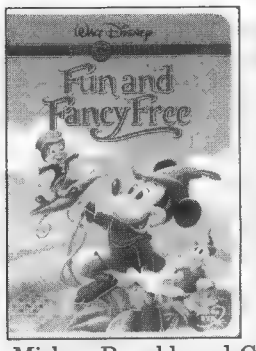
INSIDE THIS SECTION

- **Ask Mr. Silver Age** by Mr. Silver Age 30
- **Red-Hot Thrill** by Steven E. Mitchell 32
- **Dear Captain** by Andrew Smith 34

Sorcerer's Apprentice" segment of *Fantasia* (1940), Disney's third animated feature.

In 1941, a Mickey Mouse cartoon finally got an Academy Award: "Lend a Paw," though he only played a supporting role, since it focuses on Pluto's becoming jealous when Mickey brings an orphaned kitten into his home. "Lend a Paw" was one of Mickey's last film appearances for the next few years — though Minnie Mouse would appear in several Pluto cartoons during that same time.

After the war. It wasn't until after World War II that Mickey staged a comeback, this time in a Disney feature film. Earlier, Disney had considered having Mickey star in a feature; the concept that eventually made it to the screen was based on "Jack and the Beanstalk," with Mickey, Donald, and Goofy as the heroes. The result became part of *Fun & Fancy Free* (1947), with the "Mickey and the Beanstalk" segment.



From 1947 to 1953, Mickey appeared in nearly a dozen cartoons, all co-starring Pluto, who played a bigger role than his famous master. The last theatrical cartoon to star Mickey at the time (and the last to be produced by Walt Disney) was "The Simple Things" (1953), in which Mickey and Pluto go fishing. Mickey's film career temporarily came to an end — but his overall career was far from over.

TV days. When the first episode of Walt Disney's TV anthology show *Disneyland* first aired on ABC in the fall of 1954, Disney devoted the second half to presenting highlights from the first 25 years of Mickey's career. During the entire 29-year run of the Disney TV anthology, many compilation episodes featured vintage Mickey cartoons.

The Disney anthology show reinforced Mickey Mouse's career — but it was *The Mickey Mouse Club* that further cemented his iconic status — and why not? He had, by this time, become the symbol of Disney's show-business empire — and *The Mickey Mouse Club* helped make the animated super-star the idol of a generation of young TV audiences. The show first aired on ABC Oct. 3, 1955, and lasted until the end of the decade. *The Mickey Mouse Club* was created by Disney, who had been asked by ABC to create a weekday children's show for the 1955-56 TV season. Inspiration came from the Mickey Mouse Clubs that had been run by more than 400 movie theaters in the 1930s and that were populated by children who regularly went to see a Mickey Mouse cartoon at their local theater. After *The Mickey Mouse Club* ended its network run, it was seen in syndicated reruns until 1965 and then in 1975. It was revived twice with new Mouseketeers. The first revival was in syndication in 1976; a second aired on cable's Disney Channel from 1989 to 1994 and helped launch the careers of future pop stars Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, and Christina Aguilera.

End of an era. Walt Disney's death Dec. 15, 1966, marked the end of an era in entertainment history, but the studio continued. By the 1960s, it had stopped producing animated theatrical shorts on a regular basis, preferring to concentrate on features, the TV anthology show, and the theme parks. Still, Mickey and other Disney characters remained popular. In 1972-73, scenes from the archives were included in *The Mouse Factory*, a syndicated TV show with celebrity hosts who humorously dealt with various subjects; it was produced by Ward Kimball, who had animated some of Mickey's best cartoons.

In 1974, a year after its golden anniversary, the Disney studio re-released seven vintage black-and-white Mickey Mouse shorts, including "The Mail Pilot" (1933). Three years later, "Mickey Mouse Disco" (1977) had the title song accompany clips from past Mickey cartoons.

Renewed interest. The sudden re-interest in Mickey during the 1970s was only a taste of what was to come in 1978, when the character celebrated his fiftieth anniversary. "Mickey" made a train trip from Los Angeles to New York in time for a screening of "Steamboat Willie," stopping in various U.S. cities. New York's Museum of Modern Art and Washington, D.C.'s Library of Congress held retrospectives, and the TV show presented a 90-minute salute with comments from celebrities. On Nov. 13, 1978, Mickey received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the first time an animated cartoon character was so honored.

The 1980s saw many changes in the entertainment industry, including the rise of cable TV. When the Disney Channel was introduced in 1983, Mickey became the cable network's corporate symbol. By 1984, Michael Eisner and Walt Disney's nephew Roy took over the reins of the studio and set out to revitalize it through films, TV shows, and merchandising.

Mickey made only a few film appearances in the 1980s, but they were important. "Once upon a Mouse" (1981), a featurette shown with *The Fox and the Hound*, took a look at the studio's evolution starting with "Steamboat Willie." Mickey returned to the big screen in *Mickey's Christmas Carol* (1983), a Disney version of the Charles Dickens novel, with Mickey as Bob Cratchit. And Mickey made a cameo appearance in the Oscar-winning *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), teaming with Bugs Bunny and Bob Hoskins in one scene. The decade ended with a Russian animated short called "The Marathon" (1989), in which Mickey appeared, albeit in silhouette form. Though many people in the then-Soviet Union had never seen a Disney film, "The Marathon" showed the mouse's fame had extended behind the Iron Curtain.

The 1990s. In 1990, Mickey starred in the 24-minute theatrical "The Prince and The Pauper" (1990), playing both parts. Mickey appeared in a wide array of projects, from home-video compilations to short films produced especially for Disney theme parks. But he wasn't absent from theaters, making a cameo in *A Goofy Movie* (1995), as did Donald Duck. And in the 1995 Oscar-nominated seven-minute "Runaway Brain," Mickey is menaced by "Dr. Frankenollie," who wants to use his brain for his monster. (The scientist's name was a tribute to Disney animators Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston.)

In 1999, he returned to TV with *Mickey Mouse Works*, which aired on ABC (now owned by Disney). The show featured new cartoons starring, not only Mickey and Minnie Mouse, but also Donald, Goofy, and Pluto. Two years later, ABC broadcast Disney's *House of Mouse*, featuring new cartoons and vintage theatrical cartoons, framed by scenes of Mickey and his friends running a theme restaurant, as they mingled with other characters. He also appeared in *Fantasia 2000* (2000): In addition to a rerun of "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," Mickey also appeared in the opener to "Pomp and Circumstance."

Recently. Mickey has appeared in videogames, the most prominent being 2002's *Kingdom Hearts*, which paired Mickey and other characters with those from *Final Fantasy* role-playing video games. As Mickey celebrates his 75th anniversary, he remains active. Several projects, both theatrical and direct-to-video, are in the works.

Fans today can remember what Walt Disney said in 1954: "I hope we never lose sight of one fact: that this was all started by a mouse." ✦

***John Lavernoich**, 849 E. Wakefield Blvd., Winsted, CT 06098, **jlavernoich@hotmail.com**, has written the novel **Code Name: Chameleons**, which can be ordered from (877) 823-9235. More information is available at **www.angelfire.com/ct2/jlav**.*

B BIRTHDAYS and INDUSTRY EVENTS

Mon 24 NOV

CBG #1568 ships

Tue 25 NOV

Born on this date:
Chris Claremont
Paul Murry (1911)
Sean Deming (1963) – **40** years ago
Ken Lester (1963) – **40** years ago

Wed 26 NOV

Born on this date:
Dan Green
Charles M. Schulz (1922)
Barbara Marker (1949)
Doug Rice (1950)
Pat Broderick (1953) – **50** years ago
Darrell McNeil (1957)

New Comics Day! Scheduled to ship:

Dark Horse: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* #63, *Chronicles of Conan* Vol. 2, *Hellboy Weird Tales* TPB

DC: *Batman* #621, *Catwoman* #25, *JLA* #90, *Superman* #199, *Teen Titans Go!* #1

Image: *Dawn: Three Tiers* #3, *G.I. Joe vs. Transformers* #6

Marvel: *Amazing Spider-Man* #501, *Fantastic Four* #507, *Marvels 10th Anniversary HC*, *Trouble* #5

Thu 27 NOV

Born on this date:
Paul Guinan (1962)

Fri 28 NOV

Born on this date:
Shelley Eiber
Dale Crain
Mark A. Nelson (1953) – **50** years ago
Brian Apthorp (1955)
Jerry Ordway (1957)

Sat 29 NOV

Born on this date:
James Reddington
Gill Fox (1915)
Maggie Thompson (1942)
Andrea Albert (1967)

Sun 30 NOV

Born on this date:
Claude St. Aubin (1951)
Keith Giffen (1952)
Brian Pulido (1961)
Matthew Kelleigh (1973) – **30** years ago

The quiz of Doom!

Doctor Doom, that is, who sometimes used his bedside manner with heroes besides The FF

Dear Mr. Silver Age,

That Doctor Doom fellow certainly has it in for The Fantastic Four! Back in The Silver Age, did he ever consider battling any other super-heroes, instead: ones who didn't know him so well? He might have stood a better chance against them.

Lex L.
Metropolis

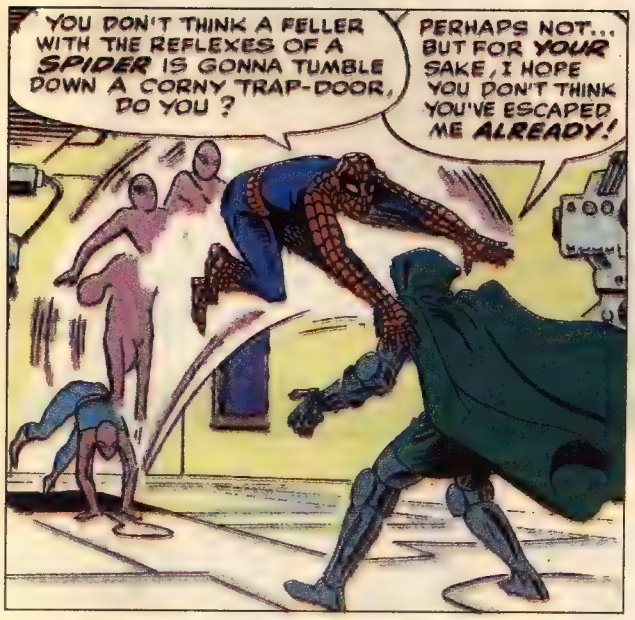
Mr. Silver Age says: Of *course*, he considered battling other heroes, Lex! He's Doom! He considered all possibilities for being defeated by men at whom he sneered when he was safely inside his Latverian castle. But back in The Silver Age, the fact that he had almost no other goals in life besides squashing Reed Richards like a bug — or at least showing him up to be the inferior of Doom — tended to focus his mind quite a bit. Even so, he occasionally created a cunning plan that required him to confront other Marvel heroes.

Do you remember those times when Doom's ingenious strategies allowed The Fantastic Four to take a breather? Test your memory with this pop quiz I cobbled together with impunity, since the doc's not around right now to squash me like a bug for having the temerity to make fun of his Silver Age battles with other heroes.

By **Craig Shutt**

1. Why did Doctor Doom capture The Wall-Crawler in *Amazing Spider-Man* #5?

a. To lure The Fantastic Four into a trap.
b. To steal his powers.
c. To keep him busy while he conquered the world.
d. To pay off a bet to J. Jonah Jameson.


YOU DON'T THINK A FELLER WITH THE REFLEXES OF A SPIDER IS GONNA TUMBLE DOWN A CORNY TRAP-DOOR, DO YOU?
PERHAPS NOT... BUT FOR YOUR SAKE, I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK YOU'VE ESCAPED ME ALREADY!

*In **Amazing Spider-Man** #5, Doctor Doom met Spidey and learned he wasn't so easy to capture. Why did he want to capture The Web-Swinger?*

2. Why did Doctor Doom capture The Assemblers in *Avengers* #25?

a. To lure The Fantastic Four into a trap.
b. To steal their powers.
c. To kill them so he could then conquer the world.
d. To punish them for calling his mama a witch.

3. Why did Doctor Doom capture The Man Without Fear in *Daredevil* #37?

a. To lure The Fantastic Four into a trap.
b. To steal his powers.
c. To prevent him from revealing Doom's plan to conquer the world.
d. To force him to help Doom sue The FF for emotional distress.

*The doc captured The Man Without Fear in **Daredevil** #37 for what reason, exactly?*

4. Why did Doctor Doom capture Namor in *Sub-Mariner* #20?

a. To lure The Fantastic Four into a trap.
b. To steal his powers.
c. To gain his help in conquering the world.
d. To get some pointers on how to be a beloved ruler.

5. Doctor Doom played chess with The Prime Mover using whom as pieces?

a. The Avengers.
b. S.H.I.E.L.D.
c. The Fantastic Four.
d. The Justice League of America.

Answers:

1. Why did Doctor Doom capture Spider-Man?

Answer: **a:** To lure The Fantastic Four into a trap.

OK, it's true: Once or twice when the doc was causing trouble for another super-hero, he in fact still had his heart set on taking down his little FF pals 'n' gal. In *Amazing Spider-Man* #5 (Oct 63), however, Doom began his interaction with Spidey by trying one of his other favorite ploys: suggesting that The Wall-Crawler join him in his quest to defeat The FF.

This bright idea occurred to him after seeing a Jameson-sponsored TV show suggesting that Spidey was less law-abiding than some believed. "With one such as Spider-Man at my side, even that accursed quartet would not be able to save themselves from my wrath!" Doom opined. Frankly, I've gotta be scratching my head over the prospect that the doc really believed the amount of power that Spidey could add to his team was all that was standing between him and FF victory. But it gave some giddyap to our plot, so I'm willing to go with the doomish flow.

Spidey, of course, turned down this compelling offer, angering Doom a tad. Victor decided that, rather than use The Web-Swinger as an ally, he'd use him for bait. So he captured the wall-crawler and then broke into TV broadcasts to show off his prize, demanding that The FF disband and surrender one at a time or he'd kill Spidey. It's likewise hard to imagine that Doom thought *that* plan was going to succeed, but this was early in his career, so we'll cut him some slack.

The sad truth is that this escapade was *so* early in Doom's career that he mistook Flash Thompson dressed as Spidey for the real deal, although nobody knew that except Flash and Spidey. The Able Arachnid, of course, showed up to enlighten Doom, with mayhem ensuing.

2. Why did Doctor Doom capture The Avengers?

Answer: a. To lure The Fantastic Four into a trap.

OK, I'll admit it, the doc was a tad obsessive at times in his desire to use other super-heroes strictly as a means to an end. In *Avengers* #25 (Feb 66), he managed to lure Wanda and Pietro (aka The Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver) to Latveria by sending them a letter indicating that the two orphans' aunt had been located and wanted them to visit. So off they went. D'oh!

They and Hawkeye and Cap, all of whom were traveling in their civilian identities, were arrested immediately upon getting off the train. "In all the excitement, none of us stopped to ask ... who is the ruler of Latveria?" Cap exclaimed. "And I've just realized the an-

Reprints of Doom!

Here's where to find Doom's cunning plans against other super-heroes in reprint form:

Amazing Spider-Man #5 was reprinted in *Marvel Tales* #142, *Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #2, *Spider-Man Classics* #6, Pocket Books' *Stan Lee Presents The Amazing Spider-Man* #1, *Marvel Masterworks* #1, and *Essential Spider-Man* #1.

Avengers #25 was reprinted in *Marvel Triple Action* #19, *Marvel Masterworks* #27, and *Essential Avengers* #2.

Strange Tales #167 was reprinted in the *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.* trade paperback.

Daredevil #37 and *Sub-Mariner* #20 haven't been reprinted yet.

swer!" Needless to say, this was fairly early in both Cap and Doom's careers, although it's not the kind of mistake Cap tended to make even then, unless, oh, the plot called for it.

Doom's plot called for him to trap The Avengers, which would make The FF fearful of his great power and desperately rush in to save them. Yeah, right. Needless to say, much as with The Great Spidey Trap, The FF didn't get their act together quite quickly enough — this time due to international complications — so all they got was a cameo and The Avengers took care of business.

3. Why did Doctor Doom capture Daredevil?

Answer: a. To lure The Fantastic Four into a trap.

This Doom guy was something of a broken record, wasn't he? In truth, when he captured The Man Without Fear in *DD* #37 (Feb 68), we cared less about Doom's ultimate plan (which was never too specific) and more about the clever trap involved. Because in this case, after capturing DD, Doom switched brains with him, putting his own into Daredevil's body!

That set up an interesting scenario, as Doom adjusted to a body with extraordinary — but extremely different — senses. Doom never did exactly catch on that Daredevil was blind, although he did realize he had other heightened senses. They don't call him a criminal genius for nothing! Meanwhile, Matt had to adjust to being able to see again, not to mention having the body of a feared despot.

The fun was ramped up a bit by Doom's failure to explain to his minions the details of his plan. So, as he strolled away in DD's body, his own henchmen attacked him — and DD (in Doom's body) was immediately released from the cell he'd been locked in. That Doom boy didn't always think things through too well.

All of this mayhem took place in New York City, since Doom had lured DD to his embassy (probably since by now everyone knew what Latveria was like and Daredevil couldn't be lured there by the promise of a long-lost relative, since he made up those himself). Doom's proposed plan somehow involved walking to the Baxter Building and gaining entrance as Daredevil to destroy The FF. I think he might've handled the gaining-entrance part, but that destroy part was never too solid, especially in DD's armorless body.

But it didn't matter, because DD (as Doom) ran after him down the street and revealed to Doom that being in Doom's body had its benefits, as well. I won't tell you why, but it was an ingenious way to stop Doom without throwing a punch — and, once again, The FF was relegated to a few cameo panels.

4. Why did Doctor Doom capture Namor?

Answer: c. To gain his help in conquering the world.

Finally! A new plan! Admittedly, capturing Namor to lure The FF into a trap might've been a bit difficult, especially by the time of *Sub-Mariner* #20 (Dec 69). I doubt that at least three of the Four would've crossed the street to aid Subby, and even the fourth, now a long-time wife and devoted mother, might've hesitated.

But Doom had a brand-spanking new plan this time, for a change. This time, he fell back on Plan B: As Namor tried to escape from Army soldiers hounding him through Fun City, he was lured into Latveria's embassy.

"I doubt that at least three of the Four would've crossed the street to aid Subby."

There, after the usual "test" to add action and eat up a page or two, Doom suggested they team up. Namor reminded Doom that they'd *already* teamed up once and it hadn't gone well, especially that part where Doom tried to kill Namor in outer space.

Big-hearted Doom offered to let bygones be bygones, but Namor wasn't buying. As had happened many years earlier with Spidey, Doom wasn't pleased by this rejection. So he tried to capture Namor and force him to turn over his Atlantean army to him. This didn't really work out the way the doc had hoped, but at least this once he didn't have the brainstorm to threaten The FF with his capture of The Sub-Mariner.

5. Doctor Doom played chess with The Prime Mover using whom as pieces?

Answer: b. *S.H.I.E.L.D.*

Nick Fury's team had been battling The Yellow Claw in a knock-down, drag-out battle with agent Jimmy Woo at the nexus. *Strange Tales* #167 (April 68) brought that confrontation to a head, leading off with a four-page Steranko spread that required two copies of the issue to absorb its full majesty. The battle raged throughout Fury's 11 pages of the book, only for him to learn, in the end, that he'd been battling a Yellow Claw robot!

After that stunning revelation, we cut to a castle in Latveria for the final two-page spread, in which we saw The Prime Mover, Doctor Doom's own computer competitor, beating him at chess. The chess pieces played by the computer were the S.H.I.E.L.D. agents; Doom was playing the Claw pieces. The computer announced its checkmate of Doom, and the doc replied that he was tired of playing, but the game had been amusing over the past months.

In reality, of course, he was furious at being beaten but didn't want his computer to know that because, um, well, he's Doom, dammit! He doesn't show his true feelings even to his major appliances! Which is where Doom and I differ, because I have no qualms about revealing to my computer just how much it ticks me off sometimes.

Let's not even ponder how, exactly, those chess-board moves were controlling the Claw robot and minions, much less the S.H.I.E.L.D. agents (which we can only suppose were being moved in response to their actions, not vice-versa). Let's just be happy that, at least in this one case during The Silver Age, Doom's involvement with heroes other than The Fantastic Four did *not* involve either luring them into a trap or signing up said hero for his side of the board, so to speak. ✦

Ask Mr. Silver Age is © 2003 by Craig Shutt. Send all comments to ***craigshutt@ameritech.net****. And don't forget that* ***Baby Boomer Comics,*** *a collection of Mr. Silver Age's favorite columns from his early days, is available for pre-order from Krause's genial operators at (800) 258-0929, offer CBHCS.*

DESPERATELY NOW HE MAKES HIS MOVES--BACK AND FORTH ACROSS THE BOARD--EACH TIME MEETING STARK FAILURE...
23
THE ODDS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY IN MY FAVOR... YET I KEEP LOSING! IN SOME MANNER DESPERO MUST BE RIGGING THE GAME SO I LOSE! BUT HOW...?
47

Doom played chess with Marvel heroes in much the same way Despero did with some DC stars in* Justice League of America *#1. Against which heroes did Doom play?

Comic-book controversy long before Wertham

The red-hot thrill: The comic-book crisis of 1948, Part Six

By **Steven E. Mitchell**

Last week: *The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors proposed Comic Book Ordinance No. 5201.*

Passed Sept. 22, 1948, the ordinance prohibited the sale of any publication to children under 18 "in which there is prominently featured an account of crime, and which depicts by the use of drawings or photographs the commission or attempted commission of certain crimes of force, violence or bloodshed." Such pictures and stories, it was asserted, often stimulated susceptible and impressionable children to commit crimes.

Violation of the ordinance was a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six months or a fine of $500 or both. Effective only in the unincorporated areas of the county, the ordinance affected about one million of the county's four million inhabitants.

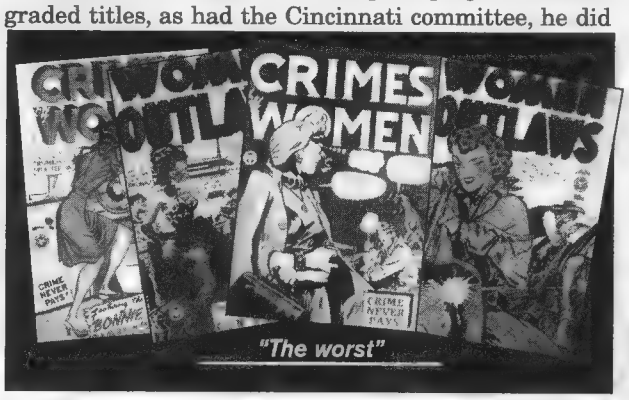
Within 10 days of its passage, the Board of Supervisors reported that no objectionable comics were on sale in the regulated areas. By the end of the year, similar bans were in effect in Dubuque, Iowa.; San Francisco, Calif.; Indianapolis, Ind.; Detroit, Mich.; and Birmingham, Ala. Most municipalities and counties continued to accept the contentions of Wertham and others that certain types of comic books had a deleterious effect on children. The first official, systematic study and analysis of comic books, conducted to determine the validity of this assumption, was prepared by Dave McGuire, director of public relations for the City of New Orleans.

In the fall of 1948, Mayor deLesseps S. Morrison ordered the survey to provide the New Orleans Commission Council with information sufficient to arrive at a judgment on an ordinance before the council to ban the sale of crime comics. For his examination of "a social problem of increasing concern to all municipal governments," McGuire examined 500 copies of 200 titles available in New Orleans.

McGuire's *Report on Comic Books* (New Orleans Public Relations Section, 1948) documented a maze of complexities that confronted any attempt to arrive at a judgment on the merits of comic books. Because of the frequently wide variations among publishers — and even among different titles issued by the same publisher — McGuire conceded that each comic book could only be judged individually.

In general, however, he estimated that one-third of all comics were completely acceptable, one-third were "borderline," and one-third were completely objectionable.

While McGuire did not attempt to prepare a list of graded titles, as had the Cincinnati committee, he did categorize nine types of comic books: Western, crime, jungle, superman, general adventure, animal characters, miscellaneous newspaper funnies, teen-age, and a conglomerate group of religious, classic, and true comics. By groups, he found most general adventure, animal characters, newspaper funnies, and teen-age comics to be inoffensive. The best of the comic books were the religious, classic, and true comics. He was critical of the undemocratic ideals portrayed in some superman comics, although he found the *Superman* title mild and relatively harmless.



"The worst"

Crime comics, which he defined in a narrower sense than did Wertham, received the most attention and harshest criticism. They were further divided into two types, with those that emphasized crime fighters such as *Dick Tracy* and *Kerry Drake* considered generally inoffensive.

The majority, however, presented "under the guise of fighting crime ... a distorted view of the lives of gangsters and law ... These murderous things are the abominations of the printing trade and the dead-end kids of the comic magazine industry." These comics, he concluded, were largely responsible for the widespread opposition to comic books.

"You can't miss these bad boys of the publishing industry. They leap out at you — and your kids — in colorful lurid type and bared bosoms." At best, such comics were "too high powered and unnatural excitement for young folks. At worst, they may have inspired teen-age boys into crime and brutality."

McGuire ranked jungle comics as second only to crime comics in offensiveness. He described them as "more violent and inferior imitations of Tarzan ... With a few exceptions, they are a green hell goulash of the very worst features of comic books." One of their worst features was the frequent depiction of kidnappings of females by apes and gorillas. McGuire believed these scenes were emotionally disturbing and suggestive to children.

Special attention was lavished on the jungle and crime comics of Fox Publications. Such Fox titles as *Crimes by Women* and *Women Outlaws* were singled out by McGuire as "probably the worst of all comic magazines sold in New Orleans."

The public relations director concluded that comic books did have an emotional impact beyond that of more conventional literature, especially on pre-adolescents. But he labeled as unjustified accusations that they were the *sole* cause of delinquent or criminal actions.

Instead, McGuire surmised, crime comics were only one of a variety of causes, but they had been exploited by the more intelligent delinquents and their defenders, who often sought only publicity by their stand. All causes of delinquency, he stated, originated in the home, and the only solution was its restoration "to its former status as a place of guidance, learning, and companionship."

McGuire preferred that reliance be placed on the pressure of informed public opinion and on individual parents and civic groups, not on the easy solution of new ordinances, to solve the problem of objectionable comics. To this end, he suggested that the New Orleans Commission Council reject the proposed ordinance and, instead, appoint an advisory board to review comics distributed in the city.

The variety of measures and codes in widely scattered communities presented almost indecipherable difficulties for publishers, according to ACMP Counsel Schultz. For the dealer, they were "not only burdensome and unfair but unrealistic and impractical."

By October 1948, nearly 50 cities had imposed some form of restrictions on comic books, with the majority acting through censorship committees. By the end of the year, more than 100 communities had considered proposals for control, though not all were passed. Thirty-two bills or resolutions were introduced in the legislatures of 16 states. Twenty-seven died in committee, and the remaining five failed to pass at some later stage.

So far, state governments were more reluctant to act than cities, but pressure from constituents was increasing.

Despite publishers' complaints of growing restrictions and declining sales, the comic-book industry as a whole continued to thrive, and the number of titles actually increased. In October 1948, it was estimated that comic books accounted for at least one-fourth of all newsstand magazine sales.

Circulation figures for the major groups were also staggering, although exact totals were rarely revealed by the publishers. The total circulation of Dell, the industry leader, reached 10 million each month, followed by National and Timely-Marvel with 8 million each, and Archie with 3.5 million. In contrast, the ACMP, which did not include any of the above groups in 1948, represented a monthly circulation of only 15 million.

In 1948, the *Town Meeting of the Air* broadcast and Dr. Fredric Wertham's widely publicized researches inspired a flood of anti-comic-book reaction that dwarfed the results of North's "poisonous mushroom" exposed eight years earlier. For those willing to believe, in an atmosphere tense with accusation, the garishly colored, poorly printed comics acquired the lurid hues of an always-suspicious, cleverly concealed threat.

In the year of the Winters decision, informal action was favored by those who feared, and housewife activists and over-vigilant councilmen answered the call for a crusade, their paths lit by newsprint bonfires.

However, most publishers continued to securely count their profits, as near-record circulation figures brightened the end of the industry's second crisis year.

For some, the ACMP and its feeble mechanism provided a sanctuary. Others erected sanctimonious pledges and protestations of innocence, still unaware of the rising new law of guilt by association.

And a few, perhaps emboldened by the failure of an earlier crusade, chose not to react in any fashion. Although none of them may have realized it, there was little reason for optimism. In New York and elsewhere, the echoes of the controversy were beginning to be heard and heeded in the chambers of state legislatures. ✦

Next week: *The best is the worst.*

Comics Shop Directory

The following is a listing of comic shops across the country, arranged by state. Be sure to mention that you saw it in CBG!

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Visions of EYKIWS dancing in their heads ...

The Captain's Correspondents have *Avengers* issues

The concept of EYKIWs (Everything You Know Is Wrong stories) has hit a hot button among ***CBG*** readers, and I'm delighted.

First suggested by **Kelvin Childs** of **Rockville, Md.,** the EYKIW is a time-honored literary device that appears frequently in comics (which I pronounce "IQ" when it's cool, and "Ick-You" when it's not so cool). EYKIW refers to stories that don't change existing continuity but suggest that some fundamental fact has been left out or has been interpreted incorrectly — and, if we interpret that one thing differently or accept the new fact, then Everything We Knew Was Wrong.

One hot-button topic has been the multiple EYKIWs suffered by The Vision of Marvel Comics. His first major EYKIW was in *Giant-Size Avengers*, which suggested that he was the first Marvel android, the Jim Hammond Human Torch of '40s Timely Comics, remade. A later EYKIW in *West Coast Avengers* #44 (May 89) rejected that idea and re-established Vizh as a new android created by Ultron. And the revisions continue apace, ping-pong fashion, as witnessed as recently as *Avengers Forever*, which suggested *both* were true.

That's prompted a number of Legion of Superfluous Heroes members to write in pro and con. ***Adam Hoffman*** *writes:*

I'd like to comment on your article on Ick-Yous — specifically, the stuff about what happened to The Vision. It seems you and I differ on this point. All the stuff you dislike for being thrown away was stuff that I had trouble understanding in the first place.

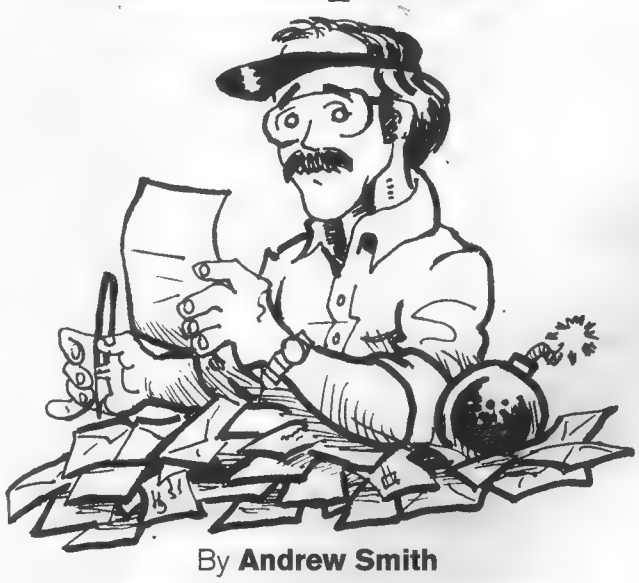
You see, I have problems with The Vision. Oh, I like the character OK. It just seems that most of the early stuff that was done with him has a way of blowing a hole in my willing suspension of disbelief. The old Human Torch origin, for example. I found it almost impossible to believe that the two were one and the same. They were too different in personality, abilities, and appearance. Moreover, I thought it kind of cheapened Vision by making him just an overhauled old hero rather than an original creation. It was bad enough that he had Wonder Man's brain patterns instead of a set of his own. I think the way is now clear for The Vision to get a really good new origin story.

Also, the destruction of the children and end of the marriage between him and Scarlet Witch: I found it utterly implausible that the two would even be able to *produce* children. I know magic was involved, but still. It might have made more sense, if they had adopted or something (as Red Tornado and Kathy did at DC).

I thought Wanda and Vizh's wedding alone took the cake. Not only was a human marrying an android, but it was a double wedding in which another woman was marrying an alien tree. Throw in the fact that it was officiated by Immortus, whose credentials and motives for being involved were both questionable. This was not only far-fetched, but it called into question the legitimacy of the vows made that day.

As for other EYKIWs: I'm waiting to see what happens on some current ones. One is the Draco story in *Uncanny X-Men;* the other is the revelation about Superboy's origins in *Teen Titans*. Cross your fingers that it doesn't get messy.

Dear Captain ...



By **Andrew Smith**

The Captain *replies:*

This was followed by a second Hoffman e-mail:

I was just looking over my *Avengers* trades and I remembered that they already tried to fix that stuff with The Vision and his origin in *Avengers Forever*. It made things *really* confusing and turned nearly everything in Avengers history into a plot by Immortus. Oh, well.

The Captain *replies:*

I certainly respect your feelings *vis-à-vis* The Vision, Adam. One man's steak is another man's dead animal flesh.

I won't try to change your mind, but I will reiterate what I said in a previous column, which is that I found The Human Torch EYKIW satisfying because it reduced the population of free-will androids in the Marvel universe. If it's so easy to do that a physicist in the '30s (Prof. Horton) and a robot in the '60s (Ultron) can do it, it stretches *my* suspension of disbelief that Doctor Doom isn't churning them out by the truckloads, all of them with far greater super-powers than either The Human Torch or The Vision — because he'd be doing it on purpose. By making Vizh and Hammond the same android, it emphasized (for me) how difficult it is to create such a thing — *so* difficult, it's only happened once. (Well, except for Ultron. And Jocasta. And ... oh, never mind.)

As to the wedding scene in *Giant-Size Avengers* #4 (Dec 75), I have to join you in chuckling at that bizarre ceremony. Where else but in comics could you see a double wedding involving an android, a mutant, a Celestial Madonna, and a human corpse animated by the spirit of a sentient alien tree, officiated over by a time-traveling lord of limbo with multiple identities? Just typing that sentence makes me laugh.

And I was no fan of Vizh and Wanda having kids — not only are kids a messy concept for super-heroes (it's irresponsible to go a-super-heroing, if you have children at home), but you're right that their conception and birth are pretty hard to swallow.

My complaint is that, once the course they'd laid out was established, the editors and writers should have had the courage of their convictions and followed it. By continually tossing out things other writers have established that they don't like, in my opinion, writers begin to lose the reader. The main draw of monthly comics is the "What happens next" factor, and if it doesn't *matter* what happens next — if *anything* can be undone willy-nilly any time it gets sticky for the writer — then I begin to drift away. And it seemed cowardly, somehow, for the kids to be wished away because they were inconvenient or just not liked by one of the writers.

In short, there have to be *some* rules, some internal consistency, even in fantasy stories, for there to be any drama. As is often said on my Message Board, "If *anything* can happen, we don't care what eventually does."

Here's another take by ***David Suiter*** *of* ***Scottsdale, Ariz.:***

I am really enjoying this topic of Every Thing You Know Is Wrong. I just had to make a comment on the EYKIW on The Vision and The Human Torch. While I did enjoy the "Vision Quest" storyline beginning in *West Coast Avengers* #42, it did try to rewrite the history of The Vision with Prof. Horton saying he had not made the body that was The Vision. This you already covered, but this also was later EYKIW'd again in the *Avengers Forever* maxi-series.

In *AF* #8 (Jul 99) it was revealed again that The Vision and the original Human Torch were one and the same android. How did this happen, you ask? As Ultron was taking the body of the original Human Torch from The Mad Thinker, Immortus placed a *divergent* body of The Human Torch on the slab where Ultron had taken the body that he would turn into The Vision. Is your head spinning yet?

Then, Immortus later had a Space Phantom assume

"IMMORTUS COULD NOT RISK FAILURE. HE *AIDED* THE DARK LORD'S EFFORTS, SURREPTITIOUSLY. ONE OF MY BRETHREN WAS *TRANSFORMED* --
"-- MADE OVER INTO A DUPLICATE OF *PROFESSOR PHINEAS HORTON*, CREATOR OF THE ANDROID TORCH --
"-- AND SENT TO DESTABILIZE THE WITCH'S *REALITY*.
"THE WORLD GOVERNMENTS HAD BEEN INFLUENCED INTO *DISMANTLING* THE VISION, *ERASING* HIS MIND --
"-- AND MY BROTHER ADDED THE *FINAL TOUCH* WHEN HE SAID --"
I HAVE *NEVER SEEN* THIS CONSTRUCT BEFORE. *THIS IS NOT MY WORK!*

the appearance of Prof. Horton and look at the deconstructed Vision and say it was not his work, therefore making The Avengers believe he was not the original Human Torch, after all. Well he *was* the original Human Torch, but the second Human Torch was used for The Mad Thinker's evil purposes and was buried — to be later revived by The Scarlet Witch. Immortus did all this to keep The Scarlet Witch from having children. Nice guy.

So the origin of The Vision you always liked is still around, but now we also have the original Human Torch running around the Marvel universe. *Avengers Forever* went a lot further to correct a lot of the unpopular EYKIWs that existed in Avengers continuity. A great story.

Now that I have finished that, I have been meaning to write to you since spring about the columns you did about The Avengers and Justice League rosters. As you may be able to tell, I am a *huge* Avengers fan, but, sadly, I missed those articles (subscription lapsed while I was moving). Is there any way to read these old articles from the archives?

***The Captain** replies:*

The Avengers and Justice League Roll Calls are available on my website, *www.captaincomics.us*. Just click on "Archives," and the rest should be clear.

As to *Avengers Forever*, I was delighted when Kurt Busiek took on the sticky wicket that is Avengers history and tried to make it more cohesive. Not only is Busiek a brilliant EYKIW artist — see *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* for an ongoing EYKIW that was absolutely flawless — but he always puts his foot down right where I want him to. He always satisfies my inner fanboy, keeps sensawunda alive at every step, and never gets a fact wrong.

Avengers Forever did all of those things and it was so chockablock with revelations and revisions that I couldn't even absorb it all on first reading. It's in my re-read pile, and I'm itching to get back to it.

*Meanwhile, **Ed Coyote** has some Avenging thoughts:*

I just finished your column in #1565. Gary Scott Beatty commented that there was an EYKIW in *Avengers Annual* #2 (Sep 68), when The Watcher announced that Rama-Tut became The Scarlet Centurion and would later become Kang the Conqueror.

Actually, the EYKIW (ick-you) had occurred quite a bit earlier. For me, it occurred back in *Fantastic Four Annual* #2 (Sum 64), when Doctor Doom (adrift in space after *FF* #23, Feb 64) runs into Rama-Tut, journeying for-

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THE ORIGINAL TORCH'S *INERT BODY* WAS FOUND BY THE MAD THINKER -- WHO *REACTIVATES* IT AS PART OF A PLOY TO DESTROY THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* --
-- BUT IN THE END, THE ANDROID REFUSES TO TAKE PART IN *MURDER*, AND PAYS THE PRICE --
-- SHUT DOWN ONCE MORE BY THE SUPER-COMPUTER *QUASIMODO'S* DESTRUCT-EYE.
THE F.F. LEAVE THE TORCH'S BODY *BEHIND* -- I SUSPECT SOME INFLUENCE FROM IMMORTUS HERE --
-- AND ONCE THEY'RE GONE, SURE ENOUGH -- IMMORTUS COMES IN WITH THE *FOREVER CRYSTAL* --
-- AND APPARENTLY USES IT TO CREATE A *SPLIT* IN THE TIMESTREAM, BUT TO KEEP THE RESULTS OF *BOTH* VECTORS OF THE SPLIT IN THE *SAME* TIMESTREAM --

Kurt Busiek summed up the events of several Marvel comics in just four panels in* Avengers Forever *#8.

ward in time after being defeated by The FF in #19 (Oct 63).

OK, at this point in *FF Annual* #2, we'd just read the origin of Doctor Doom. We knew the origin of Rama Tut from *FF* #19. "Rama" had an ancestor who had invented a time machine that R-T re-created and journeyed to ancient Egypt in.

Now, instead of acknowledging the possibility that Doom was his ancestor, these two geniuses look at each other and jump to the conclusion that they're the same person.

ICCKKK-YEWWWW!

This one has driven continuity cops nuts.

But to continue: Flash — I mean, Quicksilver — forward to *Avengers* #8 (Sep 64), the introduction of Kang the Conqueror. Kang reminisces about that encounter with Doom in his guise as Rama-Tut and then talks of how he *did* return to the future and adopted the identity of Kang the Conqueror.

So, sorry, Gary, we already knew Rama would become Kang. Roy must've thrown Scarlet Centurian into the mix, like the proverbial cement, just to make it "harder."

Speaking of Quicksilver, and Rich Howell's note, reminds me of the e-mail that I *didn't* send you.

At the beginning of your discussions of EYKIWs, you brought up *The Vision and Scarlet Witch* series and its revelation of Magneto being the father of Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver. Well, yes, but, no, not exactly.

The actual revelation occurred in an issue of *X-Men* (probably not yet *Uncanny*). In the midst of whatever adventure Chris Claremont and John Byrne had the teens involved in, there was a short sequence of panels showing Magneto recovering on Asteroid M. Viewing a computer screen, we see that he's reviewing some personal files. We see a screen with a woman who appears to be an older version of The Scarlet Witch. I'm not sure but I believe that there were also shots of Wanda and Pietro. Magneto sees the older woman's picture and remembers, "Magda."

That's when we knew.

At the time, I was working conventions with some friends. Byrne was at one, shortly after the issue in question was published. When approached, he acknowledged the significance of the panel. But he also maintained that it was never going to be dealt with in a story. The creators knew, the fans knew, and that was as far as it had to go.

Apparently someone decided differently.

***The Captain** replies:*

I was actually familiar with the sequence of events you describe, Ed. I didn't mention earlier suggestions of the real parentage of Q&SW, because it just muddied the water and I do have space limitations. The actual revelation — which, as you say, we well-read fanboys had suspected and salivated over for some time — was in *Vision & Scarlet Witch* #4 (Feb 83), so that's the one I cited. But thanks for setting the record straight, anyway, for readers who weren't familiar with the achingly slow-reveal of Magneto's fatherhood. It was worth it in the end, though, wasn't it?

As to Doom and Rama-Tut — even as a boy, reading that scene in *Fantastic Four* #23, I thought both of them were wearing their helmets a little too tightly. Let's chalk it up to the disorienting effects of space-time travel or Doom's latest knock in the head from The Thing. ✦

Andrew Smith, who writes the ***Captain Comics*** *syndicated newspaper column, can be reached at* ***capncomics@aol.com*** *or on his message board,* ***www.captaincomics.us****.*

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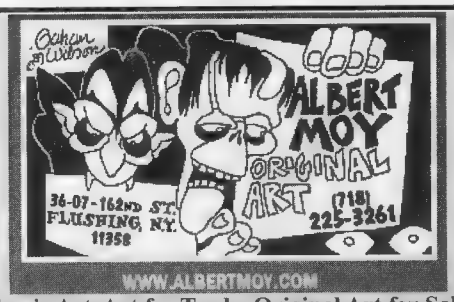

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Tales from the Database, Page 42

The ways people are buying, selling, and trading classic comic books today!

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$3,249

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$3,150

Comics dolls bring $16,000

German dolls are links to longest-running U.S. comic strip

The names "Max and Moritz" may not resonate with even some well-informed comics buffs, but dolls of the classic duo brought recognition for a doll collector at a Nov. 6 auction.

While a 17th century fancy wood doll topped the auction at $46,000 (including buyer's premium) in the James D. Julia sale of the antique doll collection of Californians Stanwood and Barbara Schmidt, there was a comics association to two of the items.

The 16-inch Kammer and Reinhardt German character dolls of the mischievous Max and Moritz sold separately, but to the same bidder, who paid a total of $16,000 for the two. The characters were created by Wilhelm Busch (1832-1908).

Samples of "Max and Moritz" shown at right are from the 1962 Dover publication reprinting C.T. Brooks' 1871 translation with the original text. Dec. 12, 1897, Dirks drew a half-page captioned, "Ach, Those Katzenjammer Kids Once More! Already Again They Make Troo-oo-oble!" And Hans and Fritz began a career that makes them today stars of the oldest comic strip still in syndication. (*The Katzenjammer Kids* is drawn today by Hy Eisman and syndicated by King Features.) ✦

Preface

Ah, how oft we read or hear of
Boys we almost stand in fear of!
For example, take these stories

Vorwort

Ach, was muß man oft von bösen
Kindern hören oder lesen!!
Wie zum Beispiel hier von diesen,

Of two youths, named Max and Moritz,

Welche Max und Moritz hießen;

Who, instead of early turning
Their young minds to useful learning,
Often leered with horrid features
At their lessons and their teachers.

Die, anstatt durch weise Lehren
Sich zum Guten zu bekehren,
Oftmals noch darüber lachten
Und sich heimlich lustig machten. –

These bad boys, for mischief ready,
Stole into the good man's study,
Where his darling meerschaum stands.
This, Max holds in both his hands;

Schlichen sich die bösen Buben
In sein Haus und seine Stuben,
Wo die Meerschaumpfeife stand;
Max hält sie in seiner Hand;

While young Moritz (scapegrace born!)
Climbs, and gets the powderhorn,
And with speed the wicked soul
Pours the powder in the bowl.
Hush, and quick! now, right about!
For already church is out.

Aber Moritz aus der Tasche
Zieht die Flintenpulverflasche,
Und geschwinde, stopf, stopf, stopf!
Pulver in den Pfeifenkopf. –
Jetzt nur still und schnell nach Haus,
Denn schon ist die Kirche aus. –

Last Trick

Max and Moritz! I grow sick,
When I think on your last trick.

Letzter Streich

Max und Moritz, wehe euch!
Jetzt kommt euer letzter Streich! –

Why must these two scalawags
Cut those gashes in the bags?

Wozu müssen auch die beiden
Löcher in die Säcke schneiden?? –

The comic editor of **American Humorist** suggested that cartoonist Rudolph Dirks create a feature based on German **Wilhelm Busch's Max and Moritz** (above). The result was **The Katzenjammer Kids**.

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● **Resale Report** .....40 | ● **Tales from the Database** by Chuck Rozanski.....42

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Would you sell a used comic book to this man?

No, we didn't think so. While he might prove a reputable sort of fellow, there's just something about saliva pouring from the mouth of a dealer as he ogles your comic books that tends to spoil the selling experience.

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(NOTE: Any resemblance between the merchant depicted at right and any actual comics dealer is purely coincidental.)

Art: Don Heck
Weird Terror #9
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EYE ON eBay

Nov. 2-8, 2003 CGC auctions

by **Darryl Buchanan**

High-grade Spider-Man-related issues dominated this week's auctions. At the top this week was an *Amazing Spider-Man* #5 in 9.4 (NM) condition that went for $13,500. The last 9.4-graded copy of this issue appeared on eBay 18 months ago and went for $9,600. Bidding was lively, as the auction received 30 bids on its way to setting the record.

GOLDEN AGE: A nice copy of *Human Torch* #3 in 8.5 (VF+) condition went for $3,850. The only previous auction for an 8.5-graded copy brought a high bid of $3,050 back in January of this year.

An *All-Star Comics* #3 in restored 7.0 (FN/VF) condition sold for $3,750. Bidding was hectic, as the auction received 35 bids on its way to closing.

SILVER AGE AND NEWER: Aside from the previously mentioned *Amazing Spider-Man* #5, two other Spider-Man auctions filled out the top three auctions this week. The price received for high-grade *Amazing Spider-Man* issues seems to be on the increase. There is some run-up in prices for mid-'70s issues as well as for the earlier '60s issues. Issues from #150 to #200 in high grade are bringing respectable prices. Issues in this range in 9.8 condition (or higher) are quite rare.

IN DEPTH: This week there were 1,439 auctions recorded receiving bids, versus 1,423 last week and 1,420 two weeks ago. Total dollar bidding was $261,220, versus $193,235 last week and $298,578 two weeks ago. There were 18 auctions receiving bids of $1,000 or more, compared with 28 last week and 39 two weeks ago.

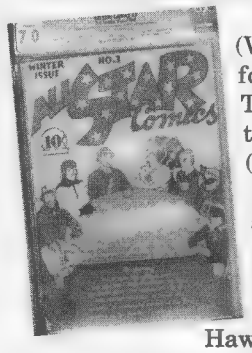
CGC auction volume seems to have reached a new weekly plateau of about 1,425 auctions per week. Last year at this time, weekly volumes were typically about 2,000 auctions per week. Then, over the summer of 2003 as the economy continued to drag, there was a precipitous decline in volume down to as low as 1,100 or so auctions. Volume has since recovered a bit along with the economy and now appears to have settled into a new weekly range of 1,400-1,500 auctions. This will continue to be monitored for significant changes, as the holiday season approaches.

Darryl Buchanan can be reached at ***dbuchanan@thecomicsheet.com.***

Noteworthy CGC Closing Prices on eBay (All copies are unrestored)

Issue	Grade	Price
Action Comics #47	4.0	$340
Al Capp's Shmoo Comics #1	9.0	$310
Albedo #2	9.8	$1,280
All-American Comics #46	6.5	$300
All-American Comics #72	7.5	$272
All-Flash #2	5.0	$707
All-Star Comics #3	7.0	$3,750
All-Star Comics #33	4.5	$562
All-Star Western #10	9.4	$1,000
Amazing Adult Fantasy #11	9.0	$661
Amazing Adventures #4	8.5	$455
Amazing Fantasy #15	7.0	$9,100
Amazing Fantasy #15	1.0	$995
Amazing Spider-Man #1	8.0	$9,500
Amazing Spider-Man #1	5.0	$2,101
Amazing Spider-Man #1	5.0	$1,977
Amazing Spider-Man #1	3.0	$1,252
Amazing Spider-Man (Reprint) #1	9.4	$495
Amazing Spider-Man #2	7.5	$1,671
Amazing Spider-Man #2	5.5	$668
Amazing Spider-Man #2	4.5	$499
Amazing Spider-Man #3	3.5	$450
Amazing Spider-Man #3	3.0	$500
Amazing Spider-Man #5	9.4	$13,500
Amazing Spider-Man #5	4.0	$270
Amazing Spider-Man #10	8.5	$787
Amazing Spider-Man #13	7.0	$295
Amazing Spider-Man #14	5.0	$325
Amazing Spider-Man #16	7.5	$325
Amazing Spider-Man #18	7.0	$250
Amazing Spider-Man #22	9.0	$380
Amazing Spider-Man #23	9.0	$500
Amazing Spider-Man #40	9.2	$710
Amazing Spider-Man #40	9.0	$400
Amazing Spider-Man #40	9.0	$380
Amazing Spider-Man #43	9.6	$1,575
Amazing Spider-Man #50	9.2	$1,100
Amazing Spider-Man #50	9.0	$775
Amazing Spider-Man #62	9.6	$566
Amazing Spider-Man #64	9.6	$331
Amazing Spider-Man #81	9.4	$293
Amazing Spider-Man #100	9.6	$1,125
Amazing Spider-Man #101	9.4	$332
Amazing Spider-Man #107	9.6	$255
Amazing Spider-Man #112	9.6	$240
Amazing Spider-Man #121	9.6	$1,225
Amazing Spider-Man #121	9.4	$662
Amazing Spider-Man #122	9.4	$520
Amazing Spider-Man #122	9.4	$511
Amazing Spider-Man #129	8.5	$365
Amazing Spider-Man #129	8.0	$280
Amazing Spider-Man #135	9.6	$490
Amazing Spider-Man #175	9.8	$262
Amazing Spider-Man #182	9.8	$370
Amazing Spider-Man #190	9.8	$299
Amazing Spider-Man #194	9.8	$502
Amazing Spider-Man Annual #5	9.4	$375
Avengers #4	7.0	$555
Avengers #17	9.4	$406
Avengers #24	9.6	$282
Batman #4	6.0	$1,450
Batman #7	5.0	$1,000
Batman #13	2.5	$228
Batman #27	8.5	$1,300
Batman #30	7.5	$483
Batman #35	8.5	$700
Batman #232	9.2	$248
Batman (RRP) #608	9.4	$1,425
Big All-American Comic Book #1	3.5	$1,200
Black Magic #1	5.0	$424
Black Terror #1	4.0	$350
Blackhawk #9	5.5	$600
Captain America #100	9.2	$305
Captain Atom #1	9.0	$245
Chamber of Chills #13	9.4	$461
Conan The Barbarian #2	9.6	$234
Contact Comics #12	6.5	$502
Daredevil #1	6.5	$650
Daredevil #1	4.0	$330
Daredevil #4	9.0	$375
Daredevil #9	9.4	$528
Daredevil #16	9.4	$1,325
Defenders #1	9.6	$660
Defenders #1	9.6	$570
Detective Comics #38	1.5	$2,700
Detective Comics #51	7.5	$587
Detective Comics #59	5.0	$330
Detective Comics #89	9.0	$1,000
Detective Comics #129	7.0	$255
Down with Crime #7	8.0	$285
Famous Funnies #212	8.0	$731
Fantastic Four #1	5.0	$3,249
Fantastic Four #1	4.5	$2,251
Fantastic Four (Reprint) #1	9.4	$449
Fantastic Four #2	5.0	$800
Fantastic Four #4	6.0	$690
Fantastic Four #4	3.5	$315
Fantastic Four #5	4.5	$600
Fantastic Four #5	2.0	$228
Fantastic Four #6	6.0	$455
Fantastic Four #26	8.0	$309
Fantastic Four #46	9.6	$936
Fantastic Four #48	9.2	$1,150
Fantastic Four #48	7.5	$325
Fantastic Four #48	7.0	$310
Fantastic Four #55	9.4	$898
Fantastic Four #58	9.6	$565
Fantastic Four #59	9.6	$392
Fantastic Four #60	9.4	$278
Flash #11	5.5	$400
Four Color #178	6.0	$495
Four Color #386	5.5	$307
Ghost Rider #1	9.4	$535
Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.4	$1,600
Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.4	$1,375
Giant-Size X-Men #1	9.0	$650
Giant-Size X-Men #1	8.5	$480
Green Hornet Comics #42	9.4	$399
Green Lantern Vol. 2 #1	4.5	$455
Green Lantern Vol. 2 #1	4.5	$330
Horrific #3	6.5	$560
Human Torch #3	8.5	$3,850
Incredible Hulk #1	4.5	$1,525
Incredible Hulk #1	2.5	$700
Incredible Hulk #4	5.5	$272
Incredible Hulk #102	9.2	$279
Incredible Hulk #162	9.6	$447
Incredible Hulk #180	9.2	$225
Incredible Hulk #181	9.2	$1,099
Incredible Hulk #181	8.5	$600
Incredible Hulk #181	8.0	$500
Incredible Hulk #181	5.5	$258
Incredible Hulk Annual #1	9.0	$255
Iron Fist #14	9.6	$820
Iron Fist (35 Cent) #14	6.0	$261
Iron Man #1	8.0	$245
Iron Man #55	9.4	$600
Jo-Jo Comics #10	8.5	$305
Journey Into Mystery #83	8.0	$4,550
Journey Into Mystery #83	6.5	$1,894
Journey Into Mystery #83	5.0	$1,250
Journey Into Mystery #84	7.5	$677
Journey Into Mystery #85	9.0	$1,525
Journey Into Mystery #86	8.0	$566
Journey Into Mystery #87	9.4	$3,150
Journey Into Mystery #89	8.5	$690
Journey Into Mystery #124	9.6	$359
Justice League of America #3	8.5	$900
Mad #1	5.5	$841
Marvel Mystery Comics #12	5.5	$900
Marvel Spotlight #5	9.4	$910
Mask Comics #2	3.0	$351

All-Star Comics #3 sells for $3,750



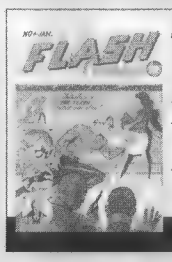
A copy of *All-Star Comics* #3 (Win 40) graded 7.0 (F/VF) sold for $3,750 on Nov. 5 on eBay. There are two copies graded better, with the highest graded 9.6 (NM+).

The issue features the first appearance and origin of The Justice Society of America. The original membership consisted of Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman, Hawkman, Atom, Sandman, Spectre, Doctor Fate, and Hourman.

– Nate Melby

ComicLink Comments

By **Josh Nathanson**



FLASH COMICS #1

DC • Jan 1940 • Cover 10¢

Featuring the first appearances of the Golden Age Flash, Golden Age Hawkman and Hawkgirl, and Johnny Thunder, this anthology title has a lot of bang for the buck.

To date, CGC has graded only two copies higher, with the highest in 9.4. The sold copy had cream to off-white pages.

SOLD IN VG/FN (CGC 5.0) FOR: $14,100

INCREDIBLE HULK #1

Marvel • May 1962 • Cover 12¢

Most of The Hulk's supporting cast (Rick Jones, Betty Ross, and her father, General "Thunderbolt" Ross) were introduced in *Incredible Hulk* #1. One of the most popular Marvel keys, CGC has only graded eight copies higher, with the highest in 9.4, a tough grade to achieve with such a dark cover.

SOLD IN VF+ (CGC 8.5) FOR: $11,500

THE THING #1

Song Hits • Feb 1952 • Cover 10¢

Eventually becoming part of the Charlton line, *The Thing* was yet another of the early 1950s horror titles. This issue features a shrunken head on the cover and comes from the Mile High collection. CGC has not graded any copies higher to date and only five others in lower grades of condition. The sold copy had white pages.

SOLD IN NM- (CGC 9.2) FOR: $4,750

JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #83

Marvel • Aug 1962 • Cover 12¢

Stan Lee and Jack Kirby brought Norse mythology to the Marvel universe with the introduction of Thor, the Norse god of thunder, and his Earthly alter-ego, Dr. Don Blake.

The sold copy had off-white pages, and CGC has graded 14 higher with the highest in 9.6.

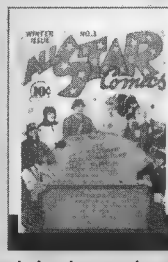
SOLD IN VF+ (CGC 8.0) FOR: $5,275

INCREDIBLE HULK #3

Marvel • Sep 1962 • Cover 12¢

By his third outing, The Hulk had become the mean, green fighting machine readers all know and love. This issue also introduced The Ringmaster and his Circus of Crime to Marvel readers. To date, CGC has graded two other copies this high and none higher. The sold copy had off-white pages.

SOLD IN NM (CGC 9.4) FOR: $10,025



ALL-STAR COMICS #3

DC • Win 1940 • Cover 10¢

After two issues collecting solo adventures of its stars, DC brought the group together for the first meeting of The Justice Society of America in late 1940. This time, the members told their individual stories while sitting around the meeting table. The sold copy had cream to off-white pages.

SOLD IN GD (CGC 2.0) FOR: $3,265

Josh Nathanson is CEO of ComicLink (www.comiclink.com), an online marketplace where a wide selection of condition-verified, investment-quality comic books, comic art, and related memorabilia are bought and sold. For more information, or to sell items, e-mail Josh Nathanson at ***buysell@comiclink.com*** *or call (718) 423-6079. You can see the new, automated version of ComicLink at* ***www.comiclinkexpress.com.***

EXCLUSIVE CGC PRICE INDEX

For CGC-graded comics auctioned, ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** compared the differences between the **median closing price offered** at each grade and ***The 2003 CBG Checklist & Price Guide*** price for an ungraded NM copy.

COMICS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1990

CGC comics graded **9.9** **"Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+2566%** (or **26.7** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **25** (**96%** of all) 9.9 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.8** **"Near Mint/ Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+920%** (or **10.2** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **943** (**83%** of all) 9.8 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.6** **"Near Mint+"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+509%** (or **5.1** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **2,208** (**87%** of all) 9.6 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.4** **"Near Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+298%** (or **3.98** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **2,316** (**84%** of all) 9.4 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: *Barely perceptible wear, tight spine. Some discoloration acceptable in older comics.*

CGC comics graded **9.2** **"Near Mint-"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+128%** (or **2.3** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **1,397** (**86%** of all) 9.2 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.0** **"Very Fine/ Near Mint"** ...sold for a median price of **NM+63%** (or **1.6** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **1,183** (**86%** of all) 9.0 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **8.5** **"Very Fine+"** ...sold for a median of **NM +11%** (or **1.1** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **929** (**85%** of all) 8.5 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **8.0** **"Very Fine"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -16%** (or **0.84** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **774** (**83%** of all) 8.0 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: *Slight creases, wrinkles at staples, some loss of gloss. Otherwise a flat, clean issue.*

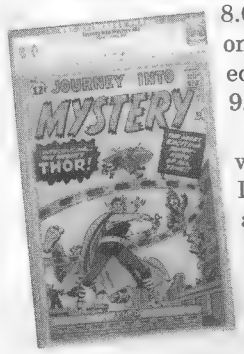
CGC comics graded **7.5** **"Very Fine-"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -37%** (or **0.63** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **586** (**81%** of all) 7.5 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **7.0** **"Fine/ Very Fine"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -48%** (or **0.52** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **464** (**81%** of all) 7.0 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **6.0** **"Fine"** ...sold for a median price of **NM -66%** (or **0.34** times the NM guide price) **in the quarter beginning August 1** *Sample: **267** (**79%** of all) 6.0 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: *Cover worn but clean; no tape or writing. Stress lines, more rounded corners.*

Journey into Mystery #83 closes at $4,550



A copy of *Journey into Mystery* #83 (Aug 62) graded 8.0 (VF) sold for $4,550 on Nov. 8 on eBay. There are 14 copies graded better, with the highest graded 9.6 (NM+).

The issue, written by Stan Lee with art by Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, features the first appearance and origin of Thor, the Norse God who took over the title with his name, as well, in 1966.

– Nate Melby

Issue	Grade	Price
Miss Fury #7	9.0	$710
Mystery In Space #75	9.2	$325
Mystic Comics #5	4.0	$630
New Adventure #15	4.5	$1,200
New Comics #2	1.8	$1,550
Nick Fury #1	9.8	$800
Planet Comics #57	8.5	$400
Sensation Comics #35	7.5	$325
Sensation Comics #56	9.0	$413
Sensation Comics #59	9.2	$537
Showcase #22	7.0	$1,800
Showcase #55	9.4	$760
Showcase #60	9.0	$344
Silver Surfer #3	9.2	$233
Silver Surfer #4	9.0	$362
Silver Surfer #12	9.4	$228
Sinister House of Secret Love #1	9.2	$249
Star Spangled Comics #10	5.0	$359
Startling Comics #49	4.5	$687
Strange Tales #89	7.0	$306
Strange Tales #97	7.5	$328
Strange Tales #105	9.2	$526
Strange Tales #111	9.2	$821
Strange Tales #115	9.0	$560
Sub-Mariner #1	9.6	$471
Sub-Mariner #5	9.4	$330
Superman #17	2.0	$399
Superman #53	4.0	$400
Superman (Canadian Edition) #53	4.5	$362
Superman #100	6.5	$401
Superman/Batman (RRP) #1	9.6	$500
Swamp Thing #1	9.6	$381
Tales of Suspense #33	8.5	$350
Tales of Suspense #39	5.5	$815
Tales of Suspense #41	9.0	$1,065
Tales of Suspense #42	9.0	$527
Tales of Suspense #44	8.5	$449
Tales of Suspense #45	9.2	$957
Tales of Suspense #46	9.2	$811
Tales of Suspense #58	9.4	$1,280
Tales of Suspense #59	9.2	$537
Tales to Astonish #21	8.0	$535
Tales to Astonish #31	8.0	$330
Thor #146	9.6	$229
Tomb of Dracula #1	9.4	$305
Ultimate Spider-Man (DF) #1	9.8	$405
Ultimate Spider-Man (White Variant) #1	9.8	$846
Ultimate Spider-Man White Variant) #1	9.6	$361
Ultimate Spider-Man (White Variant) #1	9.6	$357
Uncanny X-Men #1	9.0	$2,599
Uncanny X-Men #1	5.0	$1,126
Uncanny X-Men #1	2.0	$304
Uncanny X-Men #11	9.2	$1,076
Uncanny X-Men #35	9.0	$225
Uncanny X-Men #56	9.4	$255
Uncanny X-Men #58	9.2	$292
Uncanny X-Men #94	9.0	$309
Uncanny X-Men #94	8.5	$405
Uncanny X-Men #94	8.5	$404
Uncanny X-Men #94	8.0	$304
Uncanny X-Men #94	7.5	$234
Uncanny X-Men #101	9.6	$680
Universe X Spidey (Sketch)(DF) #1	9.8	$600
Venom: Lethal Protector (Black Variant) #1	9.8	$500
Walt Disney's Comics and Stories #25	7.5	$360
World's Finest Comics #11	5.0	$250
Wolverine (mini-series) #1	9.9	$760
Yellowjacket Comics #7	8.5	$585
Zoot Comics #14	8.5	$281

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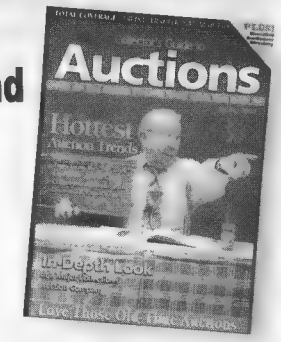

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- Trends In Collectibles, Auction Offerings
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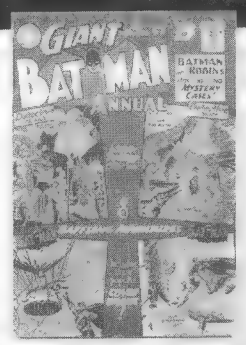

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Coming to terms

Chuck Rozanski's visit to Marvel nets not one, but two offers

Once I found my strongest ally in reforming the distribution of comics in Jim Shooter, I began to sense that my May 1979 trip to New York might actually succeed in changing the world. It had started out as simply a long-shot letter-writing campaign designed to encourage Marvel to pressure Phil Seuling's Seagate Distributing company to start offering comics retailers 30-day credit terms. It had miraculously become the turning point in the entire history of direct distribution of comics.

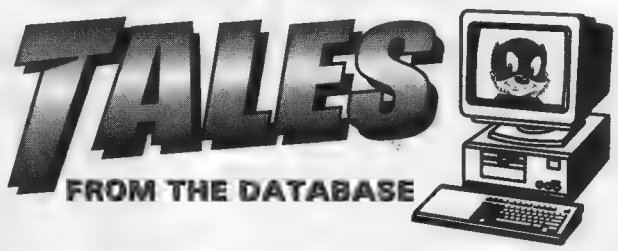
The day after I met the main players at Marvel (President Jim Galton, Marketing VP Ed Shukin, and Editor in Chief Jim Shooter) turned out to be the watershed moment in this entire process. As I've mentioned previously, because Marvel was already up against the wall due to precipitously declining newsstand sales and the anti-trust lawsuit filed against all the publishers earlier in 1979 by Irjax, Marvel management was more than willing to listen to a proposed alternative plan of action. In fact, Shukin had already drawn up a new set of proposed trade terms under which Marvel intended to allow anyone who wished to distribute Marvel comics in the direct market to have clear guidelines about how to become a Marvel distributor.

My memory is hazy about who actually drew up the new proposed trade terms, but I think the underpinnings of the logic behind the specific requirements came primarily from the research that Shooter had done into the level of market penetration that Seagate had achieved during its 1972-1979 monopoly. If I recall events correctly, Shooter brought the results of his research into executive meetings with Galton, Shukin, and Marvel Financial VP Barry Kaplan, and they had hammered out loose initial guidelines prior to my arrival. It was this draft document that Shukin had shown to me on my arrival at the Marvel offices on the second day of my visit.

Even today, I get a tingle when I remember first looking at those proposed new Marvel trade terms.

The first thing that I saw when reading the new rules was that Marvel was clearly dedicated to breaking Seagate's monopoly. The most important element (as far as I was concerned) was that Marvel was lowering the wholesale purchase requirement to be a Marvel distributor to only $3,000 per month! If you met that figure, it was offering a 60% discount, free freight, and 30-day billing! This was an opportunity beyond my wildest imaginings. Just one year prior, I had been battling Seagate simply to become a sub-distributor at 50% off. Now, I had a chance to reduce the overall wholesale cost of my new Marvel comics by nearly an additional 20% *and* infuse my company with a big dose of new working capital as a result of not having to prepay Seagate any more.

This was fantastic!



By **Chuck Rozanski**

"Adding 10,000 additional Marvel comics to my monthly order was a scary proposition."

After I had a chance to think about the ramifications of the new deal for a while, the one drawback I could see was that I was not at that time purchasing $3,000 a month in Marvel comics. Even though I had four stores and a thriving mail-order business, the low cover prices of most Marvel comics in 1979 made reaching that $3,000 per month figure daunting. The math is simple: At 60% off, a 30¢ cover-priced Marvel comic book (1979 price) cost 12¢ at wholesale. It took a wholesale purchase of 25,000 12¢ comics to reach Marvel's required $3,000 lower limit. That number was mitigated a bit by the fact that there were a few Marvel magazines with higher cover prices that I could use to lower my overall required number of comic books, but the figure was *still* about 10,000 more Marvel comics than I was typically buying in any given month.

While adding 10,000 additional Marvel comics to my monthly order was a scary proposition, I had a strong feeling that I could cover some of that required additional purchase volume by distributing Marvels at 50% off to other stores in Colorado. While I had only a couple of small wholesale accounts as a Seagate sub-distributor, I was reasonably confident that I could add almost every store in Colorado, if I offered them 50% off, plus 30-day billing.

So, after reading the trade terms, I asked Shukin if I could sign up Mile High Comics as the first Marvel direct-market distributor of the new era. Shukin readily agreed to my request, and I suddenly found my entire world changed forever.

Just becoming a Marvel distributor that day was a cataclysmic change for me, but Ed Shukin followed that up with an offer that totally blew my mind. He told me that Marvel's senior management had decided that they wanted to hire someone who knew the direct market quite well to come in to organize an entirely new marketing division specifically designed to sell Marvel comics into the comics-shop market.

Based on the discussions I had had the previous day with Jim Galton, Jim Shooter, and him, Ed was prepared to offer me first crack at that new position. I have to tell you that Ed's job proposal took me totally off-guard.

Just one day prior, I had trepidatiously taken the elevator to Marvel's offices and asked the receptionist to hide my battered suitcase behind her desk. Twenty-four hours later I'm being offered the opportunity to establish an entirely new marketing division at Marvel Comics?

This was surreal by any measure of the term. What in the heck was I going to do now?

To be continued...

***Chuck Rozanski**, owner of Mile High Comics, the world's largest online comics retailer, can be reached directly at **chuck@milehighcomics.com**. To receive his weekly e-mail newsletter, visit **milehighcomics.com** and sign the guest book.*

What customers are buying ...

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1. *Journey into Mystery* #83 in FR	$425.40
2. *Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #50 in VG	$227.00
3. *Fantastic Four* Vol. 1 #9 in GD	$136.20
4. *Silver Surfer* #3 in FN	$90.75
5. *Daredevil* Vol. 1 #5 in VG	$68.10
6. *Fantastic Four* Vol. 1 #36 in FN	$64.00
7. *Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #91 in NM	$58.35
8. *Captain America* Vol. 1 #108 in NM	$52.65
9. *Avengers* Vol. 1 #6 in VG	$52.50
10. *Fantastic Four* Vol. 1 #67 in FN	$51.15

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3. *X-Men* Vol. 1 #120 in NM	$85.05
4. *Tick* Vol. 1 #1 in NM	$72.90
5. *X-Men* Vol. 1 #99 in FN	$61.50
6. *X-Men* Vol. 1 #108 (British) in NM	$61.32
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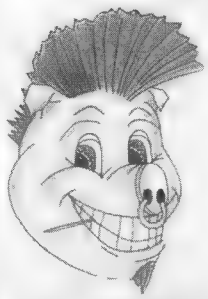

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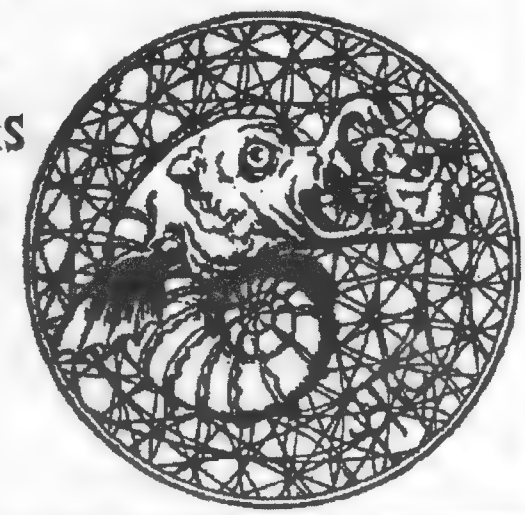

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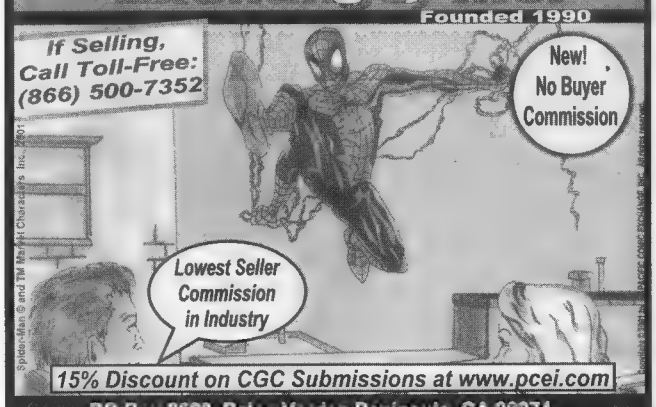
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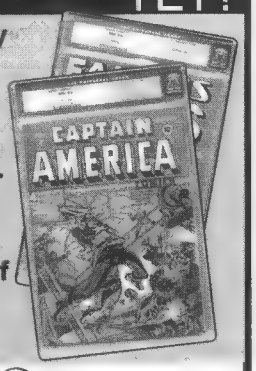

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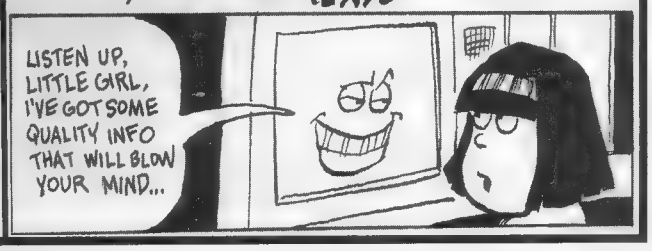

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CALIFORNIA

Nov 26 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Nov 28-30 CA, Dixon-Sacramento. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Dixon Fairgrounds. Hwy. 113 S off I-80 at cattlemen's, SH: Fri. 4pm-9pm, Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 90, F: $150. for 1, $135. for 3 or more, A: $5. daily, $10. 3-day pass, under 12 free. CA Sports Card Shows, PH: 530-241-4063.

Nov 29 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 3 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 6 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 10 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 12 CA, San Francisco. Comic Books & Collectibles Show with Jerry Rice & Orlando Cepeda, Cow Palace. Ken Wacker, PH: 707-318-6168.

Dec 13 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 14 CA, Sacramento. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Scottish Rite Ctr. 6151 H St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 80-6' & 8', F: $50.-$60., A: $4. Dan Houck, 6278 Gloria Dr., Sacramento, CA 95831. PH: 916-395-1107.

Dec 17 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 20 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 24 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 27 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 31 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 3:30pm-9:30pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

CONNECTICUT

Nov 28-30 CT, Trumbull. Comic Book Show, Westfield Shoppingtown. Merritt Pkwy. Rt. 15, exit 48, SH: mall hours, T: 40, F: $180., A: free. Mike Riccio Sports LLC, Mike Riccio, PO Box 162, Botsford, CT 06404. PH: 203-364-1209.

Nov 30 CT, East Hartford. Comic Convention, Elks Hall. 148 Roberts St., SH: 11am-5pm, F: $50., A: .99. The Bookie, Hal Kinney, 155 Burnside Ave., East Hartford, CT 06108. PH: 860-289-1208 (afternoons).

Dec 28 CT, East Hartford. Comic Convention, Elks Hall. 148 Roberts St., SH: 11am-5pm, F: $50., A: .99. The Bookie, Hal Kinney, 155 Burnside Ave., East Hartford, CT 06108. PH: 860-289-1208 (afternoons).

DELAWARE

Dec 28 DE, Newark. Sports Card, Comic Book & Collectible Show, Aetna Fire Hall. Rt. 273, SH: 10am-3pm, A: $2., 12 & under free. A to Z Promos., Bob Harper, 822 Trophy Way, Bear, DE 19701. PH: 302-438-0967.

Jan 25 DE, Newark. Sports Card, NASCAR, Comic Book & Collectible Show, Aetna Fire Hall. Rt. 273, SH: 10am-3pm, A: $2., 12 & under free. A to Z Promos., Bob Harper, 822 Trophy Way, Bear, DE 19701. PH: 302-438-0967.

Feb 22 DE, Newark. Sports Card, NASCAR, Comic Book & Collectible Show, Aetna Fire Hall. Rt. 273, SH: 10am-3pm, A: $2., 12 & under free. A to Z Promos., Bob Harper, 822 Trophy Way, Bear, DE 19701. PH: 302-438-0967.

FLORIDA

Nov 30 FL, Orlando. Collectible Show, Radisson Barcello Hotel. 8444 International Dr., SH: 10am-5pm, A: free. CCC Promos., PH: 954-579-7398.

Dec 6 FL, Jacksonville. Collectibles Show, Holiday Inn. 9150 Bay Meadows Rd., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 50, A: $5. Charles Cerrito, PH: 954-579-7398.

Dec 14 FL, Daytona Beach. Comic Book Conv., Ramada Inn Speedway. 1798 W. Int'l. Speedway Blvd., SH: 10am-4pm, A: $2. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Dec 21 FL, Orlando. Collectible Show, Radisson Barcello Hotel. 8444 International Dr., SH: 10am-5pm, A: free. CCC Promos., PH: 954-579-7398.

Dec 27-28 FL, Fort Lauderdale. Holiday Convention, Pompano Beach Civic Ctr. 1801 NE 6th St., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 100, A: $6., $10. 2-day pass. Charles Cerrito, PH: 954-579-7398.

Jan 10-11 FL, Orlando. 15th Annual FX Extravaganza Collectible Toy & Comic Book Show, Orange Cty. Convention Ctr. 9800 International Dr., T: 1,100. Marz Prod. Inc., PH: 941-360-6666.

ILLINOIS

Nov 28-30 IL, Arlington Heights. Chicago Tardis-40 Years of Doctor Who, Sheraton Chicago Northwest. 3400 W. Euclid Ave., SH: Fri. 9am-9pm, Sat. 9am-11pm, Sun. 9am-5pm, A: $30.-$35. 1 day pass, $50.-$60. 3 day pass. Alien Entertainment, PO Box 2660, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138. PH: 630-790-0905.

Nov 29 IL, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Dec 13 IL, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Dec 14 IL, Bridgeview. Toy Con, Oremus Community Ctr. 7900 S. Oketo Ave., SH: 8:30am-2pm, T: 60, A: $3., 10 & under free. Terry Mannix, PH: 708-237-1645.

Dec 28 IL, Orland Park. Sports Cards & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Jan 4 IL, Bridgeview. Comic Book, NASCAR, Toys, Sports Cards, Hot Wheels & More Show, Oremus Center. 1 blk. W. of Harlem Ave. at 79th St., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 65-8', F: $35. for 1, $60. for 2, A: $2. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Jan 4 IL, Springfield. Comic Book Convention, Signature Inn. 3090 Stevenson Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Jan 10 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33. for 1, $60. for 2, A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Jan 25 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33. for 1, $60. for 2, A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Jan 25 IL, Gurnee. Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn. 6161 W. Grand Ave., SH: 10am-3pm, A: $2. Jim, PH: 847-336-9963.

Feb 14 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80-6', F: $33. for 1, $60. for 2, A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

INDIANA

Jan 3 IN, Highland. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Lincoln Ctr. 2450 Lincoln St., SH: 10am-4pm. PH: 219-662-8029.

Jan 17-18 IN, Dyer. Comic Books & Sports Card Show, Galleria Bldg. 425 Joliet St., US Rt. 30, SH: 10am-6pm. PH: 219-662-8029.

Feb 7 IN, Highland. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Lincoln Ctr. 2450 Lincoln St., SH: 10am-4pm. PH: 219-662-8029.

Feb 21-22 IN, Dyer. Comic Books & Sports Card Show, Galleria Bldg. 425 Joliet St., US Rt. 30, SH: 10am-6pm. PH: 219-662-8029.

IOWA

Dec 6 IA, Council Bluffs. Comic Book Convention, Best Western Crossroads. 2216 27th Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Dec 7 IA, Des Moines. Comic Book Conv., Holiday Inn. 5000 Merle Hay Rd. SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

KANSAS

Dec 27 KS, Shawnee. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn. I-435 at Midland Dr. exit, SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Ken, PH: 913-764-8888.

MARYLAND

Dec 28 MD, Laurel. Comic Book & Non-Sports Card Show, Best Western. 15101 Switzer Ln. (Exit 33B off I-95), SH: 11am-4pm, A: $1., under 7 free. Fred Edeson, PH: 410-569-8357.

Feb 1 MD, Baltimore. Comic Book & Non-Sports Card Show, Airport Marriott. 1743 W. Nursery Rd., SH: 11am-4pm, A: $2.50, under 7 free. Fred Edeson, PH: 410-569-8357.

MASSACHUSETTS

Dec 7 MA, Boston. Comic Book & Toy Spectacular, Radisson Hotel. Formerly Howard Johnson 57, 200 Stuart St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 120-8', F: $95., A: $5. Monkey House Entertainment, David Cummings, PH: 978-388-6576.

MICHIGAN

Dec 12-13 MI, Livonia. Sports Card, Comic Book, Coin, Collectible Show, Livonia Mall. 7 Mile & Middlebelt, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 11am-5pm, T: 80, F: $80. for 1, $150. for 2, A: free. Bruce Mugerian Show Promos., PH: 248-788-1178.

Dec 27 MI, Livonia. Encore Con, Elks 2246. 31117 Plymouth Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50, F: $45. in advance, $50. day of show, A: $3., ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

Jan 25 MI, Livonia. X-Trava-Con, Knights of Columbus Hall. 19801 Farmington Rd. (bet. 7 Mile & 8 Mile Rds.), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 45-8', F: $45. in advance, $50. day of show, A: $3., ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

Feb 15 MI, Livonia. X-Trava-Con, Knights of Columbus Hall. 19801 Farmington Rd. (bet. 7 Mile & 8 Mile Rds.), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 45-8', F: $45. in advance, $50. day of show, A: $3., ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

MISSOURI

Dec 28 MO, Chesterfield. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn & Stes. 5 McBride & Son Ctr. Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

NEW JERSEY

Nov 30 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn. Rt. 46 Service Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', F: $60., A: $2. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07424. PH: 973-783-0608.

Dec 7 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firemen's Conv. Ctr. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8:30am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

Dec 14 NJ, Clifton. Comic Book Expo, Recreation Ctr. 1232 Main Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-6', F: $50., A: free. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07042. PH: 973-783-0608.

Dec 28 NJ, Bordentown. Comic Book Show, Armory. Rt. 206 S., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 50, F: $45., A: $2. RK Promos., Rob or Karen Gomberg, 3 Rachel Ct., Franklin Park, NJ 08823. PH: 732-422-9365 or Mike Leon, PH: 215-396-8016.

Dec 28 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn. Rt. 46 Service Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', F: $60., A: $2. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07424. PH: 973-783-0608.

Jan 4 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firehouse. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

Feb 1 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firehouse. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

NEW YORK

Nov 28-30 NY, New York City. 5th Annual National Comic Book, Art & Toys Show, Metropolitan Pavilion. 125 W. 18th St., T: 100. PH: 201-569-2011 or FAX: 201-865-3288.

Dec 6 NY, New York City. Collectors Fest Sports Cards, CD's, Records, Tapes, Videos, Mem., Comic Books & More Show, Holy Cross School. 332 W. 43rd St., SH: 10am-5pm, F: $40. for 1, $70. for 2, A: $3. Gary Lyons, PH: 718-972-3872.

Dec 7 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

Dec 21 NY, Brooklyn. Comic Book & Collectible Show, Golden Gate Inn. Knapp St. & Shore Pkwy., SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. Mark, PH: 718-266-1625.

Dec 21 NY, Rochester. CollectorFest, The Party House. 677 Beahan Rd., SH: 10am-3pm, T: 30-8', F: $40., A: free. Ernie's Cards, Ernest Orlando, 264 Park Ave. Rear Apt., Rochester, NY 14607. PH: 585-241-3198.

Jan 4 NY, Melville-Long Island. Collectibles Show. 585 Route 110, SH: 9am-3pm, T: 57, A: free. George Schultheis, PO Box 1654, Seaford, NY 11783. PH: 516-804-0047 or 361-9503.

Jan 24-25 NY, New York City. Big Apple Comic Book, Art & Toys Show, Penn Plaza Pavilion. 401 33rd St. & 7th Ave., SH: Sat. 11am-7pm, Sun. 10am-6pm, A: $8. PH: 201-865-3288.

Feb 8 NY, Melville-Long Island. Collectibles Show. 585 Route 110, SH: 9am-3pm, T: 57, A: free. George Schultheis, PO Box 1654, Seaford, NY 11783. PH: 516-804-0047 or 361-9503.

NORTH CAROLINA

Dec 5-7 NC, Salisbury. Comic Book, Sports Card, Records, Toys, Coins & More Show, Mall. I-85 exit 76, SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 1pm-6pm, T: 60, F: $60., A: free. Mike Dentino, 849 9th Ave. Pl. NE, Hickory, NC 28601. PH: 828-328-1029.

Dec 7 NC, Raleigh. Comix Con, Hilton North Raleigh. 3415 Wake Forest Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 23-6', F: $70., A: free. Lyn Anderson, PO Box 99201, Raleigh, NC 27624. PH: 919-844-1758.

OHIO

Nov 29-30 OH, Columbus. Mid-Ohio-Con, Hilton Hotel. Easton Town Ctr., SH: Sat. 10am-6pm, Sun. 10am-5pm, T: 150, A: $15. R.A.P. Promos., Roger Price, PO Box 3831, Mansfield, OH 44907. PH: 419-526-1427.

Jan 4 OH, Cleveland. Comic & Sci-Fi Con, Knight's Party Center. KOC Hall, 29101 Euclid Ave. (.5 mi. E. of I-90 & Exit 186), SH: 10am-3pm, T: 35-8', F: $55., A: $2., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

Feb 8 OH, Akron. Comic Con, Tadmor Hall. 3000 Krebs Dr., I-77 exit 120 (Arlington Rd.) off Jarvis Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 60-6', F: $75., A: $3., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

PENNSYLVANIA

Dec 6 PA, Allentown. Lehigh Valley Comic Con, Schnecksville Fire Co. 4550 Old Packerhouse Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 60-8', F: $60. for 1st, $50. for 2nd, $40. for 3rd, A: $3., 12 & under free. Lance Hawk, 1290 Vermont Ave., Allentown, PA 18103. PH: 610-797-3357.

Dec 6-7 PA, Pittsburgh. Comic & Toy Convention, Expo Mart at Monroeville Mall. Bus. Rt. 22, Monroeville, Exit 6 PA Tpke., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 450-6', A: $5., $3., under 12. D. Alessandria, 456 Old Farm Ln., Johnstown, PA 15904. PH: 877-967-1500.

Dec 14 PA, Philadelphia. Comic-Con, Stadium Holiday Inn. 10th St. & Packer Ave. (I-95 exit 19 or I-76 exit 350), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50-6', F: $70. for 1, $135. for 2, A: $3. Derek Woywood, PO Box 313, Clementon, NJ 08021. PH: 856-782-0817.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Nov 29 SC, Greenville. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Comfort Inn. I-85 & Mauldin Rd. (exit 46C), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 28, F: $38., A: $1. Rick Fortenberry, PH: 704-424-3453 or Tom Waldrop, PH: 864-244-7424.

TEXAS

Nov 29-30 TX, Dallas. ITZACON 5, Hyatt DFW Airport. A: $7. per day, $10. for both days. Phoenix Entertainment, 3352 Broadway Blvd. #470, Garland, TX 75043.

Jan 9-10 TX, Austin. TX Superhero & SciFi Collectors Expo, Crockett Ctr. 6301 Hwy. 290, SH: Fri. 12noon-6pm, Sat. 9am-6pm, T: 100, A: $8.50 for 1 day, $12.50 for 2 days. PH: 512-396-2845.

Jan 17 2004 TX, San Antonio-Live Oak. Sports Card, Comic Book & Toy Show, Civic Center. Pat Booker Rd., I-35 & Hwy. 1604, SH: 9am-5pm, T: 100-8', F: $40., A: $2., under 13 free. Eckman's Books & Collectibles, Dale E. Eckman, 8050 Pioneer Oak, Converse, TX 78109. PH: 210-945-0003.

Feb 15 TX, Killeen. Comic Book & Sci-Fi Show, Howard Johnson Inn. 803 E. Central TX Expy., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 25-6', F: $50., A: $2. JMV Entertainment, PO Box 151, Temple, TX 76503. PH: 254-771-4238 or 760-8682.

VIRGINIA

Dec 7 VA, Tysons Corner-McLean. CapiCons.com Comic Book, Sports Card & Toy Show, Westpark Hotel. 8401 Westpark Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 80-6', F: $95. for 1st, $90. for 2nd, $85. ea. add'l., A: $3., under 5 free. Jeff Rocen, 906 S. Kenwood Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224. PH: 703-912-1993 or 800-222-2057.

Dec 27 VA, Tysons Corner. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Holiday Inn-Fairfax. I-495 exit 46A, SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40-6', F: $65., A: $3. Shoff Promos. Inc., Nick Shoff, 5904 Willow Knoll Dr., Derwood, MD 20855. PH: 301-990-4929.

WISCONSIN

Nov 30 WI, West Allis. Comic Book Convention, Burnham Bowl. 6016 W. Burnham Ave., SH: 11am-4pm. Clayton Dietl, PH: 414-328-3675.

Feb 1 WI, West Allis. Comic Book Convention, Burnham Bowl. 6016 W. Burnham Ave., SH: 11am-4pm. Clayton Dietl, PH: 414-328-3675.

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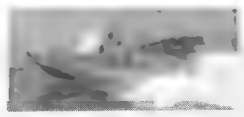

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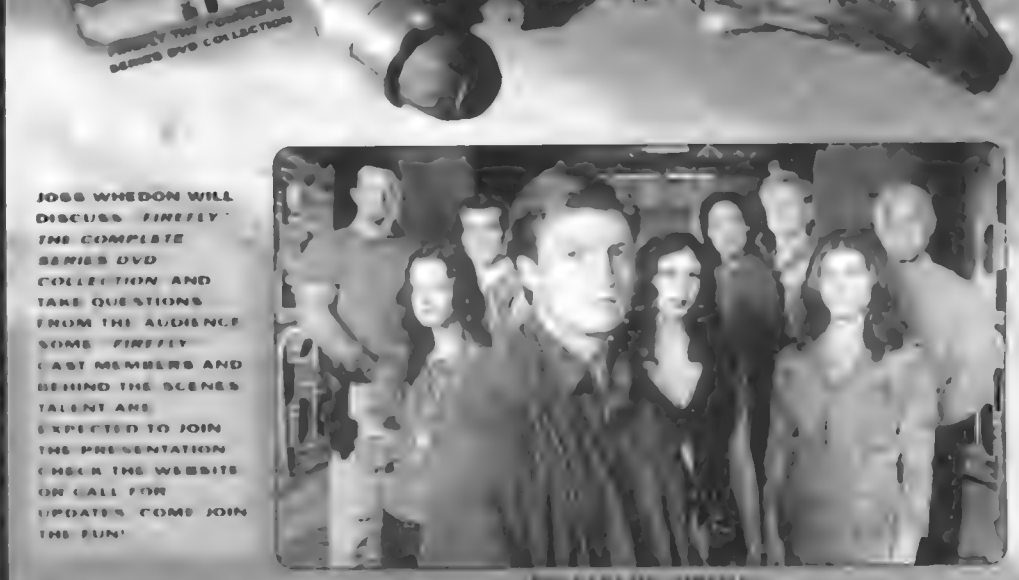

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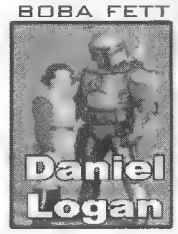

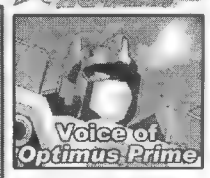

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ADVERTISERS' INDEX

A
All Star Auctions 43
Amazing Creations Ink....26
Archie Comic Publishing....26

B
Bags Unlimited 11
Bedrock City Comic Co...37, 39
Big Apple Conventions, Inc...48
Bill Cole Enterprises, Inc...3, 36

C
CBG Want List 39
Central Park Media 26
CGC 37
Circ Promotions-KP....41
Claypool Comics 26
Collectibles Insurance Agency ...41
Comic Conservation....36
Comic Heaven....37
Comiclink.com....44
Comics Buyer's Guide 18, 37, 39, 47, 50, 52, 53
Crazy Mama Productions....45

D
Diamond Comic Distributors ..2
Discount Comics....37
Dragon Con....47

E
E. Gerber Products 7
Eschenberg, Conrad....51

G
Gabri-El, Will....51
Gary Dolgoff Comics 45
Geoghegan, John....43
Giles, B.T. & S.J....44
Golden Age Comics & Games....36
Graphic Collectibles 51
Graphic Magics....37
Graphitti Designs 5

H
Halegua, Richard 51
Heritage Capital Crp....43, 44
House Of Comics.com 37

I
Inka-Dinka-Doo....18

J
J & S Comics....45

K
KP Adv Promotion 49
KP Book Promo 56

L
Los Angeles Comic Book Show 47

M
Marz Productions 48
Mastronet, Inc. 35
McBride, Mike....45
Metzger, Kim....45
Mighty Blowhole Comics 44
Mile High Comics, Inc. 27
Motor City Comic Con 47
Moy, Albert 37

N
NBM Publishing Company....26
Now Comics 26
Nuff Said Collectibles....37

O
Opus Graphics 43

P
Pacific Comic Exchange....44

Q
Quasar Comics 37

R
Redbeard's Book Den 37
RTS Unlimited....43
Russo, Stephen 37

S
Sells, Jim 45
Silver Age Comics....37
Sobolak, Ed....44
Stewart, Alex....47

T
Texas Superhero.com 47
That's Entertainment....45
Tilley, Gerald & Rose 44
Tomorrow's Treasures 43
TRH Gallery 51

V
Vanguard Productions 26

W
Westfield Company....37
White, Michael....45
Wildpig Comics II 43

X
Xeric Foundation....19

Y
Yee, Harley....37

Retailer Directory....33
Web Directory....55

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What a theme song!

When Tootsie Rolls sponsored the *Dick Tracy* radio show, they requested a more specific product identification. Therefore, the chase theme used was "Toot Toot Tootsie!"

He doubled as a clothes designer

Few know the origin of the black and green "question" suit worn by Frank Gorshin as The Riddler on TV's *Batman* and later adapted for Jim Carey in *Batman Forever*. Gorshin designed it himself, since he was tired of being the only villain wearing tights.

No, he didn't ride the Jabba the Hutt float

The first appearance of *Star Wars* bounty hunter Boba Fett was not in *The Empire Strikes Back*, but in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

If The Justice League ever meets, he's got the costumes

Professional movie "gorilla" Bob Burns has collected the costumes of many serial movie heroes, including Flash Gordon, Commando Cody, Captain America, and Captain Marvel. He also owns the George Pal Time Machine.

He's my hero!

One day, while being made up for his role in the serial *Superman*, star Kirk Alyn learned the fellow working on him was his childhood hero Eddie Polo and went into "fanboy" mode.

- Mike Curtis

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4120 Classic, For Sale
4121 Classic, Wanted
4122 Comic Collections, For Sale
4123 Comic Collections, Wanted
4128 Dark Horse, Wanted / For Sale
4130 DC, For Sale
4131 DC, Wanted
4140 Dell / Gold Key / Whitman, For Sale
4141 Dell / Gold Key / Whitman, Wanted
4150 Disney, For Sale
4151 Disney, Wanted
4160 EC, For Sale
4161 EC, Wanted
4170 Fawcett, For Sale
4171 Fawcett, Wanted
4180 Foreign, For Sale
4181 Foreign, Wanted
4190 Harvey, For Sale
4191 Harvey, Wanted
4200 Humor / Funny Animals,For Sale
4201 Humor / Funny Animals, Wanted
4204 Image, For Sale / Wanted
4207 Malibu, For Sale / Wanted
4210 Marvel / Timely, For Sale
4211 Marvel / Timely, Wanted
4220 Science Fiction / Horror, For Sale
4221 Science Fiction / Horror, Wanted
4240 Underground, For Sale
4241 Underground, Wanted
4250 Independents, For Sale
4251 Independents, Wanted
4255 Valiant / Voyager, For Sale / Wanted
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4261 Westerns, Wanted
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4321 General Comics, Wanted
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4401 Original Art, Wanted
4405 Sketch Books
4410 Big Little Books, For Sale
4411 Big Little Books, Wanted
4420 Books - General, For Sale
4421 Books - General, Wanted
4430 Paperbacks, For Sale
4431 Paperbacks, Wanted
4440 Pulps, For Sale
4441 Pulps, Wanted
4450 Magazines, For Sale
4451 Magazines, Wanted
4452 Science Fiction, For Sale
4453 Science Fiction, Wanted
4600 Reprints, For Sale
4601 Reprints, Wanted
4605 Phone Cards, For Sale
4606 Phone Cards, Wanted
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4631 Trading Cards, Wanted
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Use additional sheets of paper if needed.

See the project through? Yeah, right!

The Hollywood model may have applications to Epic

By **Peter David**

Poor Mike Sangiacomo.

Sangiacomo, a freelancer who writes regularly about comic books, became sucked into the quagmire that is and was Epic Comics and chronicled the painful meat grinder of a process that his proposed comic book, *Nowhere Man,* endured. Column after column detailed a constant stream of alterations, starting with the perfectly good title of *Nowhere Man* being changed into the perfectly bad title of *Phantom Jack,* which sounds like what Kit Walker would use to change a flat tire. From there followed a litany of assorted cooks stirring the broth, issuing suggestions and changes that were just as likely to conflict with one another as not.

What was remarkably consistent, though, was Sangiacomo's almost eerie ability to rebound from whatever his latest setback was. With a determined optimism not seen since the producer in *42nd Street* told the chorus girl, "You're going out a youngster ... but you've *got* to come back a star!" Sangiacomo would update readers on his latest trials while never losing sight of the prize: the publication of his very own comic book. On the one hand, he displayed an attitude that was more fanboyish than seemed appropriate for a would-be working professional; on the other hand, I suppose we're all fanboys here. He was just upfront about it.

But even Sangiacomo's upbeat demeanor took a pounding with the recent announcements involving the Epic line. The fact that they were being pushed back to debut in February was bad enough news. February is not the month you want to introduce new books. February is barely a month you even want to publish new books. Then came the final nail in the coffin: The four new titles making their debuts — *Phantom Jack, Sleepwalker, Strange Magic,* and the oxymoronic *Young Ancient One* — were to be collapsed into a single anthology title.

Now, there's merit to putting out an anthology title, if you can make it cost-effective. *Shonen Jump* has thoroughly trashed the conventional wisdom that there's no market for anthologies. It can be an effective format if you do it right: a nice, thick, reasonably priced book, published in black and white to save a bundle on coloring.

Epic Quarterly, or whatever it's called, isn't intended to be a bold experiment in publishing, any more than a network running episodes of a canceled series during the summer should be seen as a reconsideration of whether the series should be brought back. It's called "burning off inventory," and that's what this comes across as: a fire sale. Marvel cutting its losses.

This hasn't slipped past Sangiacomo, who writes wearily, after a year of work on a project for which he has yet to see so much as a nickel, "Apparently the point of this journey was not reaching the destination."

I can relate. My career is littered with busted projects. I've just learned not to write about them from the earliest development stages. It's like a woman peeing on a pregnancy strip, getting the little "+" sign, and running out to inspect colleges.

The problem was that, with zero money on the table, Marvel had zero investment, as well. Which meant the Epic books weren't really done deals, but, instead, projects that might happen. And as my agent, Frank Balkin, has said about show business in general: Most things that might happen or probably will happen ... don't. You will always encounter people on the fringes of showbiz who, year after year after year, have a project in the hopper that's juuuuuust about set because the funding is allllllmost in place.

"When a development executive is let go, it is not at all unusual for his successor to clear out every major project possible."

And what's the single biggest impediment to getting a project off the ground?

Regime change.

By that, do I mean that there's frustrated Iraqi movie makers, shaking their fists and howling, "Damn you, America!" because Saddam's regime was overthrown and they lost their funding because of it? No ... although, for all I know, there might be guys like that.

No, I mean that, when a development executive is let go, it is not at all unusual for his successor to clear out every major project possible — to put them into "turnaround," which is the showbiz equivalent of tossing a hot potato and returning all rights to the project to the author.

Why do they do this?

No percentage in seeing the project through. What's in it for them?

You may ask, Well, isn't the goal simply to make good movies? Shouldn't that be what's "in it for them"? You'd think that, wouldn't you? But consider: You're Mr. Jones, having just replaced Mr. Smith. You look at Smith's slate of projects.

If the projects succeed, Smith gets the credit. He's the one who brought it to the company, who got it set up. It almost doesn't matter what you yourself bring to the table; it's still Smith who initiated it (a fact he will likely keep reminding whoever will listen to him). So, if the thing takes off, Smith looks like a champ, and people ask such uncomfortable questions as, "Why did you let this guy get away?"

But let's say the project tanks. Who takes the hit for it? Hint: not Smith. He's already gone. It's not as if they're going to rehire him so they can fire him again. No, instead, Jones is going to be asked such uncomfortable questions as, "Why the hell did you champion seeing this loser through? We already fired the guy who started it, so obviously we don't trust *his* judgment. Why did we hire you, if you're no better?"

So, if you're Mr. Jones, the smart thing to do — the politically savvy, the reasonable approach — is to dump whatever major initiatives Mr. Smith had coming down the hopper.

That logic could easily be applied to the Bill Jemas Epic books.

I'm not saying it *was*. I can't read the minds of the Marvel execs who, if they didn't pull the plug on Epic, have at the very least substituted a new power source consisting of two mostly drained AA batteries. It does, however, seem a reasonable interpretation, based on the Hollywood model.

Let's say the books come out and, as unlikely as it sounds, are smash hits. Bill Jemas has the last laugh, a creative triumph. He gets all the credit. But, if the books spiral down the chute, then it's seen as throwing good money after bad. The bosses might say, "Hey, we just transferred the guy who wanted to bring back the Epic line. Why are you perpetuating his projects?" Responding, "It seemed like a good idea at the time" probably won't go over all that well.

If the material never sees print, though ... if all rights revert ... what if Mike Sangiacomo takes the book elsewhere and it's a smash? Then Marvel looks like a *shlemiel* because it had the project in its hands and tossed it aside. So what's the best course of action? Bite the bullet and shoot them all out into the marketplace at once. Upside? If it doesn't sell, it can always be said, "Well, we were testing a new format and discovered it doesn't work for us." Downside? None, really.

So we're left with the question: Mike Sangiacomo, after a year of work, you just had — as a bad hard-boiled mystery writer might put it — your heart kicked in the teeth. So are you quit of your hope of joining the ranks of professional comics writers?

The hint is in the last graf of Sangiacomo's latest (and last?) Epic column, in which he notes that Epic "find" John Jackson Miller has picked up work as the new writer for *Iron Man.* Which, I suspect, is Sangiacomo's way of saying, "What? And give up show business?" ✦

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